









AMERICA *and the*  
YOUNG INTELLECTUAL  
HAROLD STEARNS



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# America *and the* Young Intellectual

BY  
HAROLD STEARNS

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
AMERICA <i>and the</i> YOUNG INTELLECTUAL	9
VAN WYCK BROOKS: <i>Critic and Creator</i>	24
<i>A</i> STUDY <i>in</i> DOCILITY . . . .	34
LA PEUR <i>de la</i> VIE . . . .	40
WHERE <i>Are Our</i> INTELLECTUALS? . .	46
ILLUSIONS <i>of the</i> SOPHISTICATED . .	52
LOST <i>in the</i> CROWD . . . .	59
<i>An</i> INTELLECTUAL EGGSHELL PERIOD .	65
<i>A</i> QUESTION <i>of</i> MORALS . . . .	71
AU-DESSOUS <i>de la</i> MELEE . . . .	77
COMMON SENSE <i>About</i> FRANCE . .	82
OVERDONE . . . .	90
<i>A</i> DILAPIDATED SCARECROW . . .	96
BIGOTRY <i>and</i> CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS . .	100
SCIENCE <i>and</i> COMMON SENSE . . .	105
ROOTS <i>of</i> ANTI-BRITISH FEELING . .	112

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PROGRESS <i>versus</i> INDUSTRIALISM . .	126
<i>The</i> TWILIGHT of the GODS . . .	132
<i>The</i> COUNTRY <i>versus</i> the TOWN . .	138
<i>The</i> CLAIMS of LOYALTY . . .	143
<i>Through</i> ART to INDIVIDUALISM . .	150
WHAT <i>Can</i> a YOUNG MAN DO? . .	156

AMERICA *and the*  
YOUNG INTELLECTUAL



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

A short time ago Stuart P. Sherman wrote an article,<sup>1</sup> called "The National Genius," which is somewhat of a misnomer inasmuch as the substance of the discussion is really a hortatory appeal to our younger artists and writers. The article is written with humour and vigour; it is extremely able and clear, setting forth a definite point of view the implications of which suggest a consistent philosophy of life. It is because Mr. Sherman makes articulate an attitude more or less consciously shared by the majority of what we may term the tolerant and enlightened part of the generation preceding us, and because, in common with a much larger group of the younger generation than Mr. Sherman suspects, I believe this attitude a rather tragically ill-informed one, that I have ventured to reply to it. The problem of America and, or as I should say, *versus* the young intellectual—and why, in the simplest sense of interest in intellectual things, should we hesitate to use the term? why should it carry with it a faint aura of effeminate gentility?—is of first-rate importance. Discussion of it illuminates many aspects of our cultural life. And never was it more timely than to-day.

Let me begin by stating as straightforwardly as I can Mr. Sherman's main contentions.

<sup>1</sup> *The Atlantic*, January, 1921.

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

Mr. Sherman pictures himself at a typical American public dinner, which H. L. Mencken might characterise as a Rotary Club jubilee entirely controlled by rugged right-thinkers. At all events there is much talk of progress and efficiency, increased production, sanitation, and sobriety; and a future republic flowing with milk and honey so potent that everybody will then have a flivver, a phonograph and hundreds of classical records, a patent sewage system, and a wireless telephone, as well as an individual aeroplane to transport him from his immaculate home to his electric-tractor-ploughed field or to his model factory. Churches and universities will flourish, and all the highroads be macadamized. Citizens of this ideal state will be diseaseless, active, moral, and above all prosperous. The picture of the future United States is the conventional roseate Utopia dreamed of by all forward-lookers and mechanical engineers. It is to be American through and through—that is, shot through and through with moral idealism.

Perhaps as an after-thought, the chairman of the dinner then calls upon a young literary artist “to sketch a place in our programme of democratic progress for art, music, literature, and the like—in short, for the superfluous things.” The phrase grates on Mr. Sherman, as evidently it grated on the young “literary artist” in question. For this gentleman, whom Mr. Sherman makes the protagonist for all the younger generation of literary and artistic *révoltés*, then arises and delivers himself of the following blasts: (1) that the twin incubi of Democracy

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

and Puritanism have made beauty a prostitute to utility, and that the younger generation of artists and writers has seen through the solemn humbug of a future ideal republic, envisaging the failure of civilisation not only in the present but in the future; (2) that the said younger generation wants only to be emancipated from the kind of people that have spoken earlier at this dinner, for it imports its philosophy in fragments from beyond the borders of Anglo-Saxonia—from Ireland, Germany, France, and Italy, not forgetting to draw upon “the quick Semitic intelligence”; (3) that art is “letting oneself out completely and perfectly,” and that the chief thing to let out is the long repressed sexual impulses, recently unearthed by that prince of psychologists Professor Sigmund Freud, for “most of the evil in the world is due to self-control.”

Now the justness of this touching picture of the younger generation of artists and writers, I can hardly leave to Mr. Sherman's conscience. He may personally know individuals of the type described above, but I don't, and I frankly doubt if many such individuals exist. Certainly if they do, they are not typical. The picture Mr. Sherman has sketched is a caricature in the true sense of the word, i. e., a kernel of truth covered by different individual absurdities and weaknesses. The kernel of truth, of course, is in the depiction of the younger generation as in revolt against the right-thinkers and the forward-lookers. It *is* in revolt; it *does* dislike, almost to the point of hatred and certainly to the point of contempt, the type of people dominant in our present



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

civilisation, the people who actually "run things." I shall even go so far with Mr. Sherman as to agree that this is a thoroughly unfortunate state of affairs—unfortunate for the people who run things, but even more unfortunate for the youngsters. The fact of the hostility is not in dispute. But I do most vigorously dispute the reasons Mr. Sherman gives for its existence, the individual irresponsibility he implies. Quite the contrary is the case, as I shall try to show later. However, to return to the argument. . . .

Mr. Sherman goes home rather sadly from this dinner, meditating on the folly of youth and reflecting on the love of notoriety in all ages. The Restoration fellows, too, he ponders, were likewise in revolt at the Puritans; they "let themselves out" with a vengeance; did not two wits and poets of good King Charles the Second's time strip themselves naked and run through the streets, singing lascivious songs? Yet somehow they did not count, these Restoration *révoltés*; they made no headway against "the sense of the whole English nation." They left no impress, and to-day hardly their names are remembered.

Mr. Sherman continues to meditate. Beauty, he says, whether we like it or not, has a heart full of service. It is impossible to separate art from the service to truth, morals, and democracy. Our forefathers were not "grim"; did they not envisage among the inalienable rights of mankind "the pursuit of happiness"? The artist must send us these moments of happiness and delight as often as he can;



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

but he does so permanently and most truly not by divorcing himself from the moralities of our time and custom and inviting us to sensuous indulgence, but by kindling the austerer ministers till they glow with passion. Further, there is the whole question of the relation of the artist to society. Can an artist divorce himself from it, or be in fundamental revolt against its chief characteristics? Mr. Sherman thinks not. But then, what is the chief characteristic of American society? Its moral "idealism," he replies, adroitly quoting Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau, even Mr. Spingarn and Mr. Dreiser, to prove that we have this vital national culture. Thus we come to the conclusion that the artist should try to make contacts with that national culture, fertilise it, and be fertilised by it. He should, so to speak, climb on the national band wagon of moral idealism and see that a few gracious æsthetic roses are festooned around it as it hurries along the hard road of ethical and material progress.

First of all, let me set down my points of agreement with Mr. Sherman. The problem of the relation of the artist and writer to the society in which he lives is a very old one, and, it seems to me, a great deal of nonsense is talked on both sides. Of course no artist can completely escape his *milieu*, and of course in one respect all great art is disinterested, timeless, equally true for all ages and all peoples, universal. Yet there is no real conflict here; and as in philosophy the problem of the one and the many, or unity in diversity, has, so to speak, only a speculative interest, so in life the artist, although expressing

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

something universal, must do it with the materials, with the technique, and in the idiom of the particular time and country in which he finds himself. He will thus be disinterested in his art, or his form of generalising the particular, only in proportion to the sharpness and keenness of his interest in the specific. He cannot in any final sense *put by* the civilisation he lives in. And I think it basically true that a really great artist, or writer, will express the age to which he belongs. He will speak the language of all humanity, yet usually in a provincial accent. In this sense, I agree with Mr. Sherman. After all, great art is art of acceptance and fulfilment of life; rarely of repudiation and contempt, and never of indifference.

Here allow me a relevant digression. In *The Freeman* for the issue of the week of January 26, Albert Jay Nock, one of the editors, offers a few words of advice to Messrs. Sinclair Lewis, Floyd Dell, Sherwood Anderson, and Waldo Frank, whose latest novels—all of them dealing with contemporary American social life, and with the life of the middle west in particular—have appeared with a curious and provocative simultaneity. All of our novelists, Mr. Nock implies—and these younger men no less than the others—write with a certain preoccupation; they have not their inner eye on the central truth of the situation or the ultimate truth of the characters they depict, both of which are independent of time or place. They are preoccupied with the externals to the detriment of their art, which should concern itself solely with “great emotions, great spiritual ex-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

periences, great actions." Many of our older novelists, like Mr. Howells, were primarily concerned with niceness, as a different stamp, like William Allen White, are primarily concerned with morality and Americanism, so called. But the younger writers equally put their primary concern in disparagement of niceness, morality, and Americanism. Mr. Nock cites the example of Gogol in rebuttal to them all, Gogol, he says, although he lived in a régime of Russian despotism and bureaucratic stupidity beside which the recent ministrations of Mr. Palmer and Mr. Burleson in our own country appear the handiwork of mere amateurs, still contrived to do classic work, and he did it by ignoring that régime, by *putting by* the civilisation he lived in. The qualities that distinguish his work are tenderness, disinterestedness, and *serenity*, and these qualities could express themselves in his work in spite of a hostile environment. Let Messrs. Lewis, Dell, Anderson, and Frank go and do likewise, is Mr. Nock's advice. Let them also forget their environment in the sense in which Gogol did; let them not be preoccupied with it to the extent of allowing it to impinge, even for a moment, on their art. They can do classic work no matter if the republic falls, and the Japanese occupy California, and the Mexicans, New Orleans.

Now although it would no doubt be an excellent thing if our young novelists captured some of the qualities that distinguish Gogol's work—that is, if they came by those qualities honestly and not imitatively—I cannot help feeling that Mr. Nock is giving

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

advice where it is not needed, namely, to geniuses. Provided Messrs. Lewis, Dell, Anderson, and Frank are geniuses, they will not need Mr. Nock's advice anyway; provided they are not geniuses, it cannot do them any ultimate good. Neither I, nor Mr. Nock, nor Mr. Sherman, need to worry about the real genius when he appears; he will be amply able to look after himself. He will ignore his environment, or repudiate it, or challenge it, or change it, as he pleases. Furthermore, I also cannot help feeling that Gogol's genius, great as it was, was a rather narrow and special one; and that the truly great artist does not *put by* his contemporary civilisation, but that he reflects and justifies it. One thinks of Pericles, and Shakespeare, and Rabelais—universal, to be sure, yet each one impossible in himself without his peculiar age and civilisation. For strive as we will to put æsthetic values at the top of the ethical hierarchy (and I confess I think that is where they belong), in order to be at that top, there must be something under them. A man is a man and a citizen even before he is an artist; and in the work of the highest genius, it seems to me, all the claims of these different sides of life are coördinated and unified.

Yet in any event, whatever the question about a special type of genius, such as Gogol, ignoring his civilisation, or about whether the highest type of genius does or does not ignore it (and I certainly believe he does not), there can be no question at all that the young intellectual, the person not a genius, yet with a certain competence and a real interest in



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

humanistic things, *must* give heed to it. He will, perforce, be a part of the social and economic and educational machinery of the country, albeit it may be only a dissentient part. He will be interested in politics, in contemporary literature, in the type of university life we possess, in science, in art and the American theatre, in the labour movement. He cannot, and will not wish to, escape any of these interests. There will be the insistent problem of making a living in an environment where, admittedly, interest in intellectual things can hardly be said to yield quick or high dividends. Above all there will be, as Mr. Sherman himself says, quoting from the forefathers, "the pursuit of happiness." As a rational individual he will desire for himself a happy, or as Aristotle puts it, the "good" life. He will recognise that he is a social animal, and will try to find expression of and satisfaction for those sides of his nature. But he will likewise recognise the core of irreducible individualism that remains, the spiritual integrity as a separate entity that cannot be destroyed. And the happy life will be for him the life in which these two legitimate claims are harmonised and reinforce one another. Thus far I can go along with Mr. Sherman, and I fancy he would agree with the general propositions advanced in this paragraph.

The trouble comes when we try to apply these general principles concretely. What is the national culture which the young man finds confronting him in America to-day, and what are types of leaders of that culture with whom he is supposed to make contact? Mr. Sherman describes that culture as one

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

predominantly of a long and vigorous tradition, still in active functioning, of moral idealism. He hesitates to name the leaders of it—that is, the contemporary leaders, for there is a sentimental passage about Lincoln which by implication suggests that his spirit still lives in his successors.

It is not my business to quarrel with Mr. Sherman about what really constitutes American national culture, although I believe he is thoroughly wrong in his judgment. As well as a single phrase can describe it, our genuine national culture, I think, is one of almost belligerent individualism. To be sure, a certain pioneer social docility went with this, for in a new country, where living was precarious and dangerous, all within the group had to conform if it was to be successful in its adventure. When, nevertheless, the pressure of that social conformity became too great to be endured, the individual could always go west, either alone or with his family. He could strike out for himself, and lead the kind of life he chose, worship God as he chose. Precisely this type of adventurous pioneers, unafraid of the hazard of new dangers, did people our country: it is their spirit, I think, which still constitutes the real American national genius, however much that genius may be smothered and thwarted to-day in a land that is rapidly filling up and that has already passed the turn from an agrarian to an industrial nation. A good many of the younger generation would be glad to see a return to that early sturdy individualism; I myself think affectionately of my New England forefathers who kept their blunderbuss well polished and

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

hung in a conspicuous place on the wall, ready for highly individualistic use against the exactions of any too tyrannical government.

However, forgetting for the moment the question of tradition, what are the facts? Will Mr. Sherman seriously maintain that he finds a genuine moral idealism dominating the country to-day? Surely he is not so naïve as to confuse the reformistic and "uplift" tendencies of our national life—the Pollyanna optimism; prohibition; blue laws; exaggerated reverence for women; home and foreign missions; Protestant clericalism—with anything a civilised man can legitimately call moral idealism. If he looks things squarely in the face, he must recognise these manifestations of American life as in no way related to moral idealism; they are the fine flower of timidity and fear and ignorance. If Mr. Sherman were not so hostile to Freudian psychology that he persistently refuses to understand it (if ever there was a scientific justification of the ethical need of restraint, it is to be found there), I should point out to him that this so-called "moral idealism" is merely what any good psychiatrist would instantly recognise as the morbid perversities which conventionally accompany a deeply dissatisfied human life. For it hardly needs arguing that moral idealism begins with intelligence; the trouble with what Mr. Sherman is pleased to describe as American moral idealism is simply that it is illiterate—it is on the same basis of reasoning as that of a fanatic who says that because there is adultery in the world, we should kill off all women, or because there is murder, we should cease to make knives and

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

pistols. It is the moral idealism of outward compulsion as against the moral idealism of inner restraint; the moral order that comes from authority as against the moral order that comes from freedom. Which does Mr. Sherman really prefer?

It is significant that he does not mention the leaders of this national culture. Let me be specific. Suppose a young man, just out of college and returned to his moderate-sized home town in Ohio (why not Marion?), honestly tries to make those contacts with the national culture which Mr. Sherman so vigorously urges him to make. First he tries business; where will he find the idealistic business man with a vision of a future great moral republic—I mean a real vision and not a hypocritical pretence put on for the sake of the neighbours? Next he tries politics; where can he in fact go but to those leaders who took a local pride in rolling up a big majority for Brother Warren? Then he tries reform and the labour movement; can he go to a better place than to the leader of the local Woman's Christian Temperance Union and possibly to the enthusiastic local manager of a national "Open Shop" campaign? Finally, he tries music, art, and literature; but here my hand falters, the picture is too pathetic. Perhaps he ignores all these activities; he wants merely to live a gracious, and amiable, and civilised life for himself, to be part of an interesting and intellectual social group and do his work honestly within it, forgetting the harshness of the environment. Frankly, has he one chance in a hundred? Does Mr. Sherman seriously imagine Mr. Anderson being fertilised by



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

contact with his congressman? myself (if he knew my liking for wine) being enlightened by talking with Mr. Volstead? Mr. Lewis becoming civilised by long conference with Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts?

No, what the young intellectual actually finds is that moral idealism is precisely what the institutional life of America to-day does *not* want. For moral idealism, if it means anything, means fearlessness before the facts and willingness to face them, intellectual integrity, emotional honesty, the attempt to win a moral order out of the jungle of experience without bias, without any axe to grind, without native prejudice. This kind of moral idealism the younger generation has in large measure; and it is just this kind of moral idealism which the younger generation finds nowhere existent in American national life to-day. The whole drift and direction of our national life, under the control of a malignant and stupid minority, fears this kind of moral idealism as it fears hell itself. In our national life to-day the young intellectual speedily finds that *he is not wanted*. And particularly he is not wanted if he strives to accomplish just those objects, which in the abstract Mr. Sherman would be the first to praise—I mean intellectual integrity and personal honesty before the facts of life.

Mr. Sherman should try to put the problem to himself as concretely as I have attempted here sketchily to do. If he did, possibly he would avoid his most serious blunder of all—the notion that the young *révoltés* are merely so for the sake of personal indulgence, and because they find moral dis-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

cipline irksome. Nothing could be more grotesque. They revolt simply at the hollowness and hypocrisy of the standards they are supposed to worship. They revolt not in order to avoid discipline, but in order to take the first step toward a real discipline, i. e., a discipline based as far as may be on the truth. They do not revolt for the fun of it, even if a few—Roosevelt invented the phrase “lunatic fringe,” and like almost every other group the younger men have theirs—appear to do so. They revolt because they passionately want the opportunity to do honest work, serious work, intelligent work. And they know, what Mr. Sherman for all his scholarship seems never to have learned, that such work is impossible unless they are free, and futile unless the civilisation it occurs in welcomes it.

Critics have often wondered why we have not produced “great” art and literature. Perhaps here we have the explanation. I have already hinted my own belief that great art is the expression of an age, and that age must itself be great. Ours is not; it has nothing to express. This in itself would be nothing much to weep over; many ages have been fallow. But it is discouraging to find this curiously persistent hostility on the part of the older generation (of course in point of view, not necessarily in age) toward all of the younger generation’s attempt to make our national life a little nearer to greatness—to make it more honest, more fearless, more intellectually straightforward, more humanly free, more rational. Of course our young intellectuals waste much time in discovering the hollowness of our insti-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

tutions; of course their tone is often fretful and peevish; of course there are always those to identify freedom with mere running away from life and playing like a happy animal. Yet surely a man of Mr. Sherman's intelligence and sympathy should be able to discern the reality beneath the appearance. The fact remains, he does not; and when I say he, I think of the whole class he represents. Even the intelligent and tolerant desert us. Can we be blamed if we suspect that beneath the ostensible reasons lie others—fear primarily, fear that an honest attempt to understand our point of view might make them deeply uncomfortable and dissatisfied? It is only a suspicion, but it is a growing one.

## VAN WYCK BROOKS: *Critic and Creator*

WHEN "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" appeared early in the spring of last year, the instantaneous and rather excited critical attention it received was a clear indication that its author, Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, had hit the mark, for better or for worse. Many reviewers were of the opinion that it was decidedly for the worse, and did not hesitate to say so in no uncertain terms. More discriminating appraisers found many minor points to challenge, yet on the whole recognised the power and novelty of the volume. In fact, the title itself was somewhat provocative. To be sure, since Mark Twain's death "The Mysterious Stranger" had been published, and there was a kind of dim public awareness of the fact that the soul of our greatest humourist had been troubled, that a few black clouds had perhaps hurried across the sunshine of a national myth. Nevertheless, the main outlines of that myth have remained unchanged: Mark Twain the successful, the happy, the loved, the ever-cheery. And there was something chilling in the title of this book—what "ordeal" had Mark Twain ever gone through? What did the author mean by such a title?

The strange part of it was that the author meant exactly what he said. He meant an "ordeal," and all that an ordeal implies. He meant even more:

that Mark Twain had not surmounted it successfully. He meant that, whatever the outward appearance, Mark Twain had been fundamentally a failure, had not reached his artistic majority; that his genius had been frustrated and thwarted into false channels by a harsh and obtuse environment; that the inner conflict between his creative impulses and the outer social claims put upon him was severe and prolonged; that a writer who should have been one of the satirists of all time was in reality, except for one or two exceptions of a so-to-speak unguarded moment (as in "Huckleberry Finn"), not a supreme literary artist at all, but what Arnold Bennett called a "divine amateur." Naturally this attempt to reveal the clay in the feet of one of our national idols was not relished by the conventional reader—it was a bit too disturbing. For Mr. Brooks did not content himself with a mere statement of the fact; he carefully went into the causes underlying the fact, and the chief of those causes he found in the American environment of Mark Twain's lifetime, principally the middle and far West of his youth, the stark and ugly provincialism of the small towns of his boyhood on the Mississippi, his mother, his friends, his wife, and finally his children. Without any technical jargon, indeed without any of the ordinary professional interest in abnormality, the book became a genuine Freudian analysis of Mark Twain's unconscious motives. It was an absolutely novel and fresh method of approach (Miss Katherine Anthony's biography of Margaret Fuller is a recent example of the application of substantially the same method);



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

a pioneer attempt to study one of our native "great" men realistically.

It is hardly my purpose here to go into an exposition of the success or failure of Mr. Brooks's attempt. The immediate reaction to the book has now about spent itself, and both admirers and detractors have had their say. The time has legitimately come for a quieter evaluation: for through all the pros and cons about Mr. Brooks's book one fact was never lost from view—the fact that the book was powerful and original, and that its author was some one to be reckoned with. His more recent work on the *Freeman* (New York), of which he is literary editor—principally under the caption of "A Reviewer's Note-Book"—has amply justified that judgment. They reveal a critical mind, as the "Ordeal" revealed it, detached and cool, scholarly and informed, almost French in its clarity and finesse, sophisticated without being merely adroit, and sympathetic to youth without being merely sentimental. They reveal, as the "Ordeal" likewise revealed them, certain very intriguing weaknesses. I shall attempt to sketch the, as William James might term them, tough and tender sides of a critical faculty that has genuine importance for American letters.

Let me begin by stating the bare facts. Van Wyck Brooks is a comparatively young man, a graduate of Harvard, the author of more than a half dozen books of literary criticism, who has taught in New England and in the far West in universities, and who, in addition to having contributed many special articles to various magazines, has at one time or an-

other been editorially connected with them. He was one of the editors of the well-known, if short-lived, "Seven Arts," and at present is an associate editor of the *Freeman* (New York). He has lived abroad, and has lectured to a regular class of English workmen on his usual topics. His sympathies have consistently been with what, for want of a better term, we may call the younger generation, and he has written a most charming and illuminating introduction to a posthumous collection of essays, "The History of a Literary Radical," by the late Randolph Bourne, of whom he was a great admirer. Yet his sympathy with the younger generation has never betrayed him into indiscriminate praise of bad work, merely because it was fresh and unusual; he has never relaxed from judging by a high criterion. Nor has his persistent conflicts with the ordinary academic mind blinded him to the claims of careful scholarship, as possibly a brief list of his published books will suggest: "America's Coming of Age," "The World of H. G. Wells," "The Malady of the Ideal," "The Wine of the Puritans" (A Study of Present-Day America), "John Addington Symonds" (A Biographical Study), "Letters and Leadership," and "The Ordeal of Mark Twain."

Such a summary of course does far less than injustice to its subject; these are the more or less accidental externals necessary for adequate approach. The right of Mr. Brooks to the attention of any one seriously interested in American intellectual and cultural life lies, it seems to me, in this: His high passion for the validity of the claims of the creative life,

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

his constant reiteration of the dignity of the profession of letters, his never-tiring affirmations of the legitimate and important place of art and literature in even our materially preoccupied civilisation. I realise how simple this sounds, and in an older and more wise civilisation it might sound even unimportant. But in a civilisation such as ours—still pioneer, still slightly embarrassed at the implied criticism of the arts, still uneasy in the presence of those to whom mere material success literally means nothing—the function of one who accepts the task of this re-affirmation is neither simple nor unimportant. Not once, but a thousand times, not merely in one review of a book or in one critical article, but again and again, the critic of this sort must remind us to begin with that the life of the spirit is the primary thing—not amusement, nor cleverness, nor mere artistic ingenuity, nor coating the pill of moral exhortation with the sugar of popularity, but the creative mind. It is a discouraging and almost thankless task, for it is the kind of assumption we all too blithely accept without troubling ourselves about thinking it through. One can easily foresee the result of this touchstone when applied to our more popular novelists; it is more disconcerting when applied to our more pretentious writers because it must perforce go beneath sham and self-deception. For instance, although Mr. Brooks resents as hotly as your more naïve literary radical, the comparative neglect given to men, say, like Dreiser and Cabell, he cannot content himself with merely tooting their horn; precisely because they do make serious pretensions, he judges



them seriously, i. e., by European standards, with results not altogether complimentary. Yet the conventional disparager of either of these men will find small comfort in Mr. Brooks's severe appraisements; he does not condemn them because they abandon certain American standards, but because, having abandoned them, they did not do so fully or artistically. The practical difference is immense. And combined with this high passion for the claims of the creative life Mr. Brooks possesses infinite verbal felicity, sharp psychological insight, true simplicity of approach, and wide scholarship—surely no mean equipment for any critic!

One would not have to make any serious reservations to this judgment, yet four important defects, which impair the easy functioning of his admitted gift, ought to be noted. The first is the most interesting, and can be best explained by an analogy.

When certain critics complained that Nietzsche's fulminations against aspects of Christianity—particularly against charity and humility—arose because he was lacking himself in those emotions, and could therefore not adequately appreciate their value, Nietzsche wrote to his sister in defence that, on the contrary, he hated these virtues not because he had not himself experienced them but because he had experienced them to excess and knew their danger. Similarly, Mr. Brooks is a part of the tradition he repudiates; he cannot quite escape being somewhat academic in his attacks on academicism. Unlike a rough and tumble critic such as Mr. H. L. Mencken, to whom the whole academic tradition is external,

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

something to be amused at or have fun with but not to take any more seriously than an annoying fly on a hot summer's day, Mr. Brooks has to fight the battle within himself almost every time he writes. He repudiates the academic tradition through internal conflict rather than external contempt; he cannot be quite objective about it. Particularly does this reveal itself in an occasional shrinking quality to his style, somewhat like Matthew Arnold writing at his worst.

This faint aura of old-fashioned gentility, which seems to cling to certain portions of Mr. Brooks's writings, this curious lack of gusto and heartiness, really springs from a sort of asceticism, expressing itself in reiterative preoccupation with the claims of the creative life. It is a fine theme, but Mr. Brooks plays on it a little too constantly; he cannot seem to forget it for moments long enough to permit sensuous enjoyment of the things of the flesh and the devil, as, for example, with that finest of ironists, Anatole France, one feels that the logic of ideas may always be spiced with frank appreciation of fair women, old wine, and a good table. Mr. Brooks is a trifle too serious to be a great ironist, and particularly in his "Ordeal of Mark Twain" this almost evangelistic fervour to underscore the main theme has evoked from many critics the charge—although I believe, on the whole, it is not a wholly just one—of something of a lack of sense of humour. It all goes back, it seems to me, to a delicate sensitiveness, a detachment, cool and well-nigh impeccable from an intellectual point of view, but not warmed sufficiently with direct experience. It is sensibility moving in a

rather rarefied atmosphere of ideas and subtle emotions, explaining, too, his constant fear that our younger writers will be drawn away from the true spirit of culture into the more or less irrelevant vortex of politics and sociology. For example, Randolph Bourne in the "History of a Literary Radical" spoke of living down "the new orthodoxies of propaganda" as he had lived down the old orthodoxies of the classics, and in his introduction to that book Mr. Brooks interprets that to mean that had Bourne lived, his interests would have "concentrated more and more on the problem of evoking and shaping an American literature"—an interpretation that I think clearly incorrect. Still, whether correct or not, it is an illustration which serves as an excellent index to this aspect of Mr. Brooks's point of view. He shrinks a little from the practical world, as if it were in a kind of malign collective conspiracy to destroy one's interest in the true things of the spirit—whereas the fact probably is, it is in no conspiracy at all, but merely sodden and indifferent, fully preoccupied with the economic difficulty of living. The young writer of to-day cannot escape this soddenness and indifference; it is almost imperative he have some central conviction as to how this economic difficulty can be solved so that creative energies may be set free. He does not have to be a conscious propagandist for this conviction, quite the contrary; but he must have it as a background to his mind so that the world becomes, so to speak, spiritually tolerable and his creative instincts may function without let or hindrance. It is a penalty all writers have to pay

## AMERICA and the YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

for living in this age—that is, a penalty they must pay if they expect to be heard and to exercise any genuine influence. Mr. Brooks does not like to face this difficulty squarely; he shudders a bit at economics instead of recognizing the imperative need of humanising it.

Perhaps a deeper defect is Mr. Brooks's lack of some central philosophy of life, some definite *Weltanschauung*. At some times he writes like a convinced *free-willist*; he challenges authors because they do not properly see their rôle of leadership, implying that a handful of creative minds, set free and disinterested, may change the whole drift and colour of a civilisation—as certainly such handfuls seem to have done often enough in the past. At other times he writes like a convinced determinist; he explains the weaknesses of authors in terms of their environment, implying as plainly that unless there is a collective tradition, a way of life, an objective culture furnishing clear standards of discrimination, authors must necessarily be crippled and thwarted—as certainly such maladjusted authors seem to have been so crippled often enough in the past. Yet both points of view cannot be absolutely true; they are fundamentally incompatible. Nevertheless Mr. Brooks seems unable to effect any reconciliation between them, with the result that often in his writings there is an odd effect of internal vacillation—that is, intellectually. But Mr. Brooks is still a young man; there is nothing irremediable in this, and I prefer to regard it simply as an indication that Mr. Brooks has not yet reached his full intellectual maturity. 'After all, one remem-



## VAN WYCK BROOKS: *Critic and Creator*

bers that William James did not publish his first book until he was forty-eight.

Mr. Brooks's reception by other American critics has been, on the whole, encouraging as appreciation, but discouraging as guidance. His power and equipment have been recognised and welcomed. Certain academic critics—men like Stuart P. Sherman—have attacked him, as might naturally have been expected, although usually, I think, for the wrong reason. In any event, his reception has not been personally helpful to him—I mean by that that he has not been able to evoke any considerable body of intelligent criticism which would help him to correct his faults. Possibly such a body of intelligent criticism is not to be found in America to-day; there assuredly seems to be no standard to which the young writer, wise or foolish, good or bad, may repair with some confidence. There is most certainly no body of tradition to reflect the judgment of his peers.

It is precisely the chief function of Mr. Brooks to contribute towards the creation of those institutional lacks in our environment. He can hardly fail to help in that creation, if only by virtue of his calling such insistent attention to those things in America—if they are ever to be built at all—which he himself missed, and thus, vicariously, missed for others.

## A STUDY *in* DOCILITY

THE articles on America and Americans by Mr. Henry W. Nevins, which have appeared originally in the *London Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian* and have subsequently been reprinted in some of our newspapers and magazines, are both illuminating and good-tempered—a grateful combination, for it must be really difficult for the intelligent and perceiving foreigner to survey our contemporary civilisation without becoming angry. But Mr. Nevins, with an alert eye for our weaknesses, contrives to keep urbane and well-disposed. It is easy to see that the author has had many of his pre-conceptions destroyed by the facts of our life as he saw them, some pre-conceptions quite amiable and others obviously less so. He seems frankly surprised and pleased at our inveterate good-nature and easy-going ways—surprised, also, although not so pleasantly, at our terror of public opinion and docility before the ukases of our irresponsible government. He finds it difficult to understand the fetish we make of our antiquated Constitution, and our deep fear of any fundamental change. We do not challenge authority, he says; we accept it in any of its forms with almost child-like patience; a heritage, he suspects, from the severity of our Puritan forebears. For the most part Mr. Nevins's observations are just and shrewd, if

## A STUDY in DOCILITY

also, in our opinion, a trifle too kindly and tolerant; and we can with a clear conscience recommend a reading of them to all who wish to know the cultured outsider's reaction to our contemporary American social life.

But the explanation Mr. Nevinson makes of our docility, while true enough as far as it goes, seems to us somewhat inadequate. Further, it is only one side of the medal, so to speak, for our docility, undoubtedly our worst fault, is the inevitable accompaniment of our lack of class-consciousness or caste-feeling, which, in its turn, is unquestionably our greatest strength. Now this lack of class-consciousness is derived not so much from Puritanism *per se* as from the whole pioneer tradition. Social distinctions can not in a pioneer country have the rigidity or importance they invariably have in any old and long-settled country. When every one was engaged in the great adventure of exploiting the natural resources of a virgin continent, when economic opportunity lay to anybody's properly acquisitive hand; when for many years the fact—and not the myth, as it is to-day—of free land created an almost irresistible *Drang nach Westen*; when a fortune could still be made and lost in a week; when capital was fluid rather than concentrated; when finance and business had more the aspects of a game than a serious profession—with such a pioneer background, many aspects of it continuing even to this day, social distinctions are felt as rather absurd and a definite caste system becomes next to impossible.

It is in this respect that one feels most deeply

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

American when abroad; we always resent the servile "sir" of the English "man" and find it difficult not to cry out in rage when foreign taxi-drivers or luggage men doff their caps out of, if not real respect, at all events immemorial tradition. The spontaneous sense of equality of the blaspheming American baggage-smasher appears healthy and genuinely democratic by comparison. In fact, our hatred of servility in any of its forms is one of the deepest of our national feelings; we really do believe that one man is just as good as another—if not a little bit better.

But this is not ten per cent the outcome of Puritanism; it is the equality of the pioneer, or in modern terms the *entrepreneur*, to become which, if one wishes, is still regarded as every native American's inalienable right. It is not an especially ennobling type of equality, to be sure; it is rather the type of equality that states that every little pig shall have his equal chance at the swill-trough of national prosperity. Yet whatever its materialistic origins, it has resulted in a very definite emotional attitude, an almost complete absence of anything like class-consciousness. This is the real and fundamental reason why the Socialist party in America remains essentially alien in its point of view, and has never adapted itself successfully to native psychological conditions. Temperamentally we dislike uniforms, rank, titles, medals, and all other badges of distinction and difference; which has resulted, as all foreign observers have pointed out, in an incredible uniformity of dress and speech and mannerism, a standardisation fitting



## A STUDY *in* DOCILITY

in extremely well with modern industrial methods, national advertising, and large-scale production.

To put it in a nutshell, the docility which Mr. Nevinson justly and correctly deplores is the price we pay for a real democratic equality. When distinction of any kind, even intellectual distinction, is somehow resented as a betrayal of the American spirit of equal opportunity for all, the result must be just this terror of individualistic impulses setting us apart, either above or below our neighbours; just this determination to obey without questioning and to subscribe with passion to the conventions and traditions. The dilemma becomes a very real one: How can this sense of democratic equality be made compatible with respect for exceptional personalities or great minds? How can democracy, as we understand it to-day, with its iron repression of the free spirit, its monotonous standardisation of everything, learn to cherish an intellectual aristocracy without which any nation runs the risk of becoming a civilisation of the commonplace and the second-rate?

American docility is the natural result of the pioneering background of our history, just as European servility is the natural result of that continent's feudal background. In the first instance, our terror before what is called public opinion and our fear that we shall be found out transgressing the accepted moral standards, has its compensation in the absence of any bowing-down before mere caste. In the second instance, the intense class-consciousness in a country like England has its compensation in the presence of

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

an intellectual aristocracy that does not hesitate to view middle-class morality and middle-class ideals with contempt. Whichever view prevails, there are advantages and disadvantages. Is it possible to reconcile the advantages and at the same time avoid the evils which look like the necessary correlative of adopting either point of view?

The history of American democracy during the last ten years does not seem to point to an affirmative answer to that question; to tell the truth, to find an answer to the riddle appears too much like discovering how to eat one's cake and have it too, a discovery not yet made although mankind rather obstinately refuses to give up hope. For is it not really an open question whether we have not abandoned our terror of mere caste only to replace it with an even fiercer terror of that democratic leviathan, The Average Man? Have we not refused to bow down to noble blood, only that we may bow down in even more lowly fashion to the average man and his commonplace prejudices?

Certainly any thoughtful student of the course of social history in democratic America would hesitate to answer these questions in the negative. We have witnessed a steady increase in the glorification of the average; the average in health, in morals, in intellect. Our strongest passion seems to have become more and more the passion to be as closely as possible like every one else. From the point of view of human personality, we have literally become afraid to go home in the dark. This increasing standardisation is no mere accident; it is part of the normal de-

## A STUDY *in* DOCILITY

velopment of our type of democracy, at least up to the saturation-point. At present, our most logical hope can only be that this saturation-point has been almost, if not fully, reached. We shall but be hugging illusions, if we imagine that any great literary or artistic movement will be possible in America until the present ideals of democratic equality have been re-examined and re-evaluated.

## LA PEUR *de la* VIE

IT is curious what different types of mind and what different methods of intellectual approach have produced an almost identical diagnosis of the anæmia of modern industrial civilisation. Long before the present world war William James, in his now prophetic essay "A Moral Equivalent for War," expressed the criticism of the alert and discerning mind at the thinness and barrenness of a universe constructed from merely well-intentioned humanitarian ideals. To a man of such vigour and real daring a world of placid utopianism was intolerable. James's whole essay was a straightforward attempt to assess the high value of danger and risk in any endurable society. Yet so utterly unlike a temperament as that represented by George Santayana made a similar complaint in "Winds of Doctrine," saying with great bitterness that nothing was meaner and more contemptible than the desire to live on, somehow, at any price—a desire which seemed to be the chief characteristic, and to further which was the main intellectual preoccupation, of the age. Even in so unphilosophical and essentially journalistic and contemporary a writer as H. G. Wells there often recurred this same bitterness at the lack of colour and movement in modern life, where, as he once expressed it, a man could live through his entire three score years and ten fudging and evading and never

## LA PEUR *de la* VIE

being really hungry, never being really thirsty or angry or in danger, or facing a really great emotion, until the agony of the deathbed. Civilisation had not merely refused to calculate on death, but had come almost to the point of refusing to believe in it. The keener minds rebelled against that hypocrisy.

Then came the war, and with it that most disconcerting phenomenon which L. P. Jacks has described as "the peacefulness of being at war"—the sense, at last, that there was really danger and high adventure and the possibility of dealing and receiving death once more. Of course the conventional reformist type of mind was shocked and horrified at this emergence of death as a reality. Up to what we might call the saturation point of sensitiveness these minds dwelt with almost unctuous detail upon blood, pus, agony, and human hopes shattered to bits by unfeeling fire and shrapnel. These were the people who during the first year of the war never tired of telling us that civilisation had tumbled into ruins. But as they had never really faced death before the war came, so they never really faced it afterward. Their shrinking from war's horrors was not sincere; they protested too much. Unlike the average soldier, dragged from an industrial life of doubtful happiness, thwarted in his aspirations for creative activity, crushed in his few timid strivings for genuine emotions, bound by routine, they did not accept the war as a kind of release from the diligent muffling against the realities of life and death which we call modern civilisation. In all men in whose veins blood has not wholly turned to water there is left a strong



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

instinct of what the French call *nostalgie de la boue*, and while they do not pretend to like lice and mud and sudden pain and hunger and cold and an iron discipline that reduces their own individuality to zero, it would be idle to deny that they find in all these things a kind of deep gratification (a gratification which the conventional pacifist mind cannot even imaginatively appreciate) that life is not the smooth, round, tasteless monotony which the industrial revolution had almost succeeded in making it.

Naturally soldiers do not intellectualise about war in the ingenious fashion of Mr. Jacks, and for them its glamour has little connection with the trappings and parade and music of militaristic romance. What is undeniable, however, is that war, in so far as it is a war and not a corporation-like mechanism, does satisfy a fundamental and thwarted human need. This is either ignored or denied by the conventional humanitarian mind, which suddenly in August, 1914, discovered that war was horrible and men were the sons of women. And as a consequence this type of reformist intellectual approach—by far the most common—after its first shattering of amiable illusions developed a curious technique of evasion, which is precisely as much a denial of the reality of death in actual war time as it was formerly in the piping days of peace. Details are not here necessary, for we all recognise those for whom to-day the emphasis is all upon the happy by-products of the present agony, the new world, integration, and so on. Indeed, instead of being shocked by war out of their earlier paltry utopianism to face and to cal-

## LA PEUR *de la* VIE

culate upon the reality of death in life, the last four years seem merely to have made them take refuge in even more grandiose utopianisms. Too many of the schemes for a reconstructed world after the war are merely self-protective prisons in which the well-wishers defend themselves from the assaults of the awful reality beating at their doors.

But the competent and realistic mind is not afraid either to face the possibility of death or to describe modern war in any other terms than those of permanent human values. It does not shrink from a world of danger and struggle, yet neither does it gloss over or prettify the tragic fruits of the modern battlefield. Bertrand Russell is a signal example of the humanist and realist who strikes this compromise between a recognition of the necessity for danger and colour and creation and movement in a decent civilisation, and a recognition of the futility and waste of modern war. He realises, as Gilbert Cannan in his passionate little book "Freedom" also realises, that modern wars are the atonement we make for our lack of appreciating the human evils of a pallid, "safe" industrialism. On the other side of the enemy frontier, Professor Sigmund Freud voices much the same idea in his short essay, "Reflections on War and Death," for the translation of which we have to thank the diligence and scientific interest of Dr. A. A. Brill and Mr. A. B. Kuttner. It is true that Dr. Freud's final plea has not entirely the hopeful and prophetic quality of Bertrand Russell's vision. Evidently the essay was written early in the war, for it is spotty and unco-ordinated and



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

slight. Freud has not attempted to deal with the second and less cynical part of the dilemma of modern war as definitely and optimistically as Russell. But he has stated afresh with great vigour, and with the powerful reinforcement of his well-known technique of psychological analysis, the barrenness of modern civilisation—a barrenness which arose from its refusal to calculate upon death.

“Life becomes impoverished and loses its interest when life itself, the highest stake in the game of living, must not be risked.” In ordinary, everyday existence we can get only the thin gratification of our ever-dying, ever-resurrected heroes of literature and the stage. All our risks and our challenges of fate are vicarious. Thus we are inconsolable when death actually happens, and we act “as if we belonged to the tribe of the Asra, who also die when those whom they love perish.” As Freud points out, war compels us to change all that—to recognise the reality of death, just as the death of the beloved of primitive man (who, like our own unconscious to-day, did not believe in death) forced *him* to recognise its reality. For war restores what civilisation can hide, heroism which springs from our deep inability to believe in our own death, pleasure in the killing of the hated one in the enemy (the hatred which is the component of all love), and power to rise above “the shock of the death of friends.” Freud asks us if we have not, in our civilised attitude towards death, lived psychologically beyond our means. His own answer of course is in the affirmative, and the affirmative is probably correct. He is certainly right

## LA PEUR *de la* VIE

in urging us to shake off our hypocrisy about death and to calculate upon its realities. But it is a plea which is relevant for peace as for war. Whatever civilisation emerges from the recent clash of arms, it can have no stability and no creative joy unless our former timidities are exorcised. Life loses its major virility when we strive at all costs to maintain it. That is the justification for Freud's plea, and it is sufficient.

## WHERE *Are Our* INTELLECTUALS?

WHAT is the matter with the American intellectuals? If they really occupy the valid position of mediating between extremes, the alternate attacks of the conservatives who hint that they are insidious, and of the extremists of the other end who call them timid and time-serving, ought to flatter them tremendously; for they are always being attacked in just this fashion. On the Sunday following the explosion in Wall Street, the Reverend Dr. Manning, of Trinity Church, at the head of Wall Street, preached a few words of warning against them; and every issue of your downright "red" periodical has at least one contemptuous fling at them. Yet somehow the careful observer comes to feel both charges as unreal; the intellectuals are not so much faint-hearted as they are bewildered, and they can hardly be called insidious in their influence, when the fact is that they exercise practically no influence at all. The trouble goes much deeper.

First of all, as is true of all other countries, they are numerically an extremely small class. By common consent, they are not the college and university professors occupying official positions. These professors may sympathise with certain phases of their activity, in fact, they often do so; but it is a sound intuition that puts them outside the class. It is felt

## WHERE *Are Our* INTELLECTUALS?

that by the terms of their official position itself they have given hostages to fate: they are committed. And the intellectuals' ideal—the correct and fine one, too—is that first and foremost the intellectual must be disinterested, non-sectarian and non-partisan, devoted to no pursuit except pursuit of the truth. Official educators are not easily thought of as in this group; only occasionally can the man of genius like William James, rise above his professorial identifications. Similarly, although the man of science might be thought to be the natural leader or certainly the first member of the intellectual class, science has been cut up into too many unrelated specialisms. Once more the intellectuals' ideal—and once more the correct and fine one—is that the truth in question is not any narrow one of method or of limited and precise observation, but the truth of the whole range of life. It is the philosopher's point of view; what to-day we call the humanistic view. Only occasionally can a man of genius like Huxley or Agassiz, transcend his special sphere, and attain it. No, the term intellectuals, has come to mean something both broader and narrower; publicists, editors of non-trade magazines, pamphleteers, writers on general topics. In France they are represented by such men as Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, and Romain Rolland; in England, say, by Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, Angell, Massingham, Scott, Brailsford, Wallas and Cole; in America—by such as the reader may nominate. ✓

It is true, then, that the class is a small one. Perhaps for that reason it might naturally be expected

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

not to have much influence; and in this country there is a certain excuse for its impotence, in the fact that minorities are more despised here than in any other country. Well and good; but the same class is small in all countries, as we have already said, and even if other nations are more tolerant in such matters, it is never in the nature of things for a minority to be popular. Yet the fact remains that in France and England this group has exercised, and is exercising to-day, enormous influence; it is also the fact that in America to-day it is exercising no influence at all. Differences in social structure can explain a good deal, but not everything. There are deep internal weaknesses in the position of the American intellectual.

In our brief definition of the ideals which the intellectual attempts to represent, we come upon our chief clue to these weaknesses. The American intellectual is primarily not disinterested; second, he has kept his attention upon an extremely narrow range of subjects, politics above all—which perhaps is to be expected in a country where politics, in spite of its accomplishing so little, is so much the topic of common conversation, so much the reformer's instrument—and then, after politics (although in a curiously faint-hearted manner, as if only in answer to the persistent attacks of the radicals) economics. A few, by force of a curious cultural atavism, apparently, are interested in certain derivatives of religion; a larger number take a lively interest in literature and art and philosophy; although in the last instance, oftenest with contempt for those who devote over-much



## WHERE *Are Our* INTELLECTUALS?

of their energy to economic and political subjects. But one can count on the fingers of one hand those who, like Mr. Bertrand Russell in England, are flexible enough and unafraid to take for their province the whole diverse range of contemporary American social life. This almost instinctive limitation of interest is both the result and the cause of a kind of partisanship, the bias which inevitably comes from too close preoccupation with one subject; exemplified most drearily in the myth of the Ph. D. As a cause of this partisanship, it is linked up with what we ventured to term the primary weakness of the American intellectual—his almost complete lack of disinterestedness.

This primary weakness can best be seen as the consequence of a far and an immediate historical tradition, a cultural driving force in American life long antedating the war, and powerfully reinforced by it. It is, in brief, the tradition of getting things done, of definite accomplishment. That is why so many young Americans start out to become intellectuals, disinterested lovers of the truth, and end up by becoming reformers. The natural temper of the country is horribly evangelical, and it is only by trying to get some new idea or reform "across," that the intellectual comes to feel that he has a respectable place in our contemporary social life. When thought is despised and feared, one must make action and verbiage do duty for thought; one must "show results." The pitiful breakdown of American intellectuals under the pressure of war-hysteria can be traced to the working of this immemorial national



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

tradition. To stand outside the current of events in splendid isolation, like Randolph Bourne, was felt to be both erratic and snobbish, and also ineffective; that was the crushing argument, ineffective. Every intellectual prided himself on being pragmatic, and bristled with indignation at the ultimate sceptic of any of the values supposedly involved in "winning the war." It would have been utterly alien to American temperament, something incredible to conceive, that any party should have arisen in America—such a party as did arise in Russia in 1916 and early 1917—advocating the idea that true national salvation lay in defeat rather than victory. The very Russian word *podvig* is almost untranslatable. We make a religion of optimism, of activity, of getting things done and always for the better. It is against this metallic social environment that the intellectual has to fight, and to which he usually succumbs.

But this succumbing to the gospel of accomplishment, which the intellectual often rationalises as the victory of his common sense and good balanced judgment, is really only the outcome of an incredible *naïveté*. The true and permanent influence of the intellectual is never so much the result of what he specifically advocates as of the example that he sets, and of the ideas that he clarifies and sets in motion. The true and permanent influence of the intellectual comes as much from a complete lack of the evangelical temper as from anything else. He is humble, but without any of the vain self-depreciation that shrewd old Dr. Johnson so unerringly exposed; because all those really interested in the life of the mind are

## WHERE *Are Our* INTELLECTUALS?

humble, humble before the facts. He is hard-working and patient, unlike too many of our contemporary intellectuals who are just clever dilettanti in ideas. He is content with what, to the impatient reformer, must seem like very small "results." Above all, precisely because he is disinterested, he is objective, curious, and inquiring. Where in this present American environment of propaganda and counter-propaganda, of material triumphs and spiritual defeats, can he be found? He can not be found; he is too busy getting on the band-wagon. It is part of our national tradition that he should get on the band-wagon, and that he follows this tradition is the ultimate reason why he has such negligible influence. He wants to "find" himself so eagerly and so quickly, that he only succeeds in losing himself in the crowd.

## ILLUSIONS *of the* SOPHISTICATED

IF one wished to prove the soundness of the instincts of the ordinary man, one might do it most neatly, not by pointing out his virtues and general level-headedness, but rather by revealing the *naïvetés* of his betters. For, in truth, it is oftener the sophisticated, the intellectual, and the highly educated who is the victim of illusion than it is the everyday man of little or no schooling—the sophisticated are merely more ingenious in disguising the fact. Thus, to be specific, one might take as a concrete example of *naïveté* on the part of those who most pride themselves in their lack of it, the fact that the sophisticated always welcome with ill-concealed delight the downfall of the charlatans and mountebanks who dabble in mysticism of psychic phenomena. Precisely what is the flavour of the enjoyment they feel when the tricks of “mediums” are unmasked? Usually their explanation is that the exposure of intellectual dishonesty—when it is no worse than that—is of itself a guarantee of a wholesome desire to cherish intellectual integrity. This is true enough, as far as it goes. But this is not the whole reason for the educated man’s delight in such exposures, nor in the final analysis, the primary one; and just so far as the sophisticated person really imagines it to be

## ILLUSIONS *of the* SOPHISTICATED

the whole reason, he is as naïve as the gullible soul he is "showing up."

Untrained, with no scientific discipline, without perhaps a high degree of intelligence, the ordinary man rushes in where many a philosophical angel fears to tread—often, indeed, denies there is any such place to rush to. The field of mysticism, the field of the miasmatic and the unknown (in the common sense of the word) is a field extraordinarily resistible to the ordinary rationalistic methodology. Its concepts are much vaguer than the concepts of the objective world of observable fact, or at least they appear to be so. Its values seem to have no place in the hierarchy of the ethical scheme evolved by the alertly logical intellect. Consequently the sophisticated person denies the relevancy of any discussion of this field, and he points to the charlatan as a confirmation of this judgment.

What has happened, of course, is that a certain field of discussion has been declared closed, not because it may not exist, but because exact and intelligible exploration of it is so unusually difficult. The ordinary man, blissfully unaware of the severe discipline required even to survey the objective, observable world rationally, has none of the sophisticated person's qualms or fears. He has the courage of his lack of training. He dabbles in what is usually called spiritualism, because his interests lead him there. That he is bound sooner or later to make something of a fool of himself in his quest does not discourage him. The intellectual it does discourage—or rather, frighten. The intellectual is often

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

tired after a rational survey of the observable world; he finds that world hard enough to be intellectually honest with; he seldom sighs for new worlds to conquer. Thus he usually welcomes those who, when they go outside the ordinary plane of rational inquiry, by their blunders and ineptitudes apparently prove that no other than the ordinary plane has meaning.

This is an illusion, of course, the joint product of intellectual weariness and cowardice, and it is here that the dialectical geniuses of the East can teach us a wholesome lesson. For in its best estate, Eastern philosophy does not shrink before these new difficulties; it applies the logical process still more rigorously to them. Too often your Western-minded, determinedly objective and rationally purposeful thinker, will at that point where reason needs to be applied more rather than less, simply deny the relevancy to the discussion of reason at all. He will deliberately put it outside rationalistic controversy; for the sophisticated person is really afraid that further rigorous, logical and rational exploration may show that all his previous concepts are on a false basis. Something of this sort has happened in the realm of higher mathematics. The present concept of infinity, for instance, to a certain extent corrects and to a certain extent modifies the earlier and more simple mathematical concepts, which, for most practical purposes, were adequate. Non-Euclidean geometry, for a further instance, means nothing in the world of affairs, yet ultimately it may radically modify the whole methodology of formulæ, to the ad-



## ILLUSIONS of the SOPHISTICATED

vantage of certain of the more complicated higher sciences. This goes to show that these new concepts were achieved, not by the abandonment of the rational methodology that created the earlier and more naïve concepts, but by the extension and intensification of this same methodology. The sophisticated who laugh at the ordinary man dabbling in spiritualism are like the high school teacher of algebra laughing at the *Principia Mathematica* of Mr. Bertrand Russell. They do not see it, for the people they laugh at are simple, eager souls for the most part; but if they had a few highly disciplined Eastern dialecticians for their opponents, they might laugh, as the saying has it, on the other side of their face.

Another illusion of the sophisticated springs from a lack of historical perspective, and is, after all, a rather gracious one. If one surveys the record of Western man, say from 1500 or 1000 B. C. to the present time, it becomes apparent that those periods in which art has truly flourished—those happy conjunctions and harmonious interplay of men's emotions and instincts with their environment—are but brief interludes in a ceaseless flow of bloodshed, intolerance, and ignorance. Except for the lucky few caught in the right generations, most of us are doomed to live in fallow periods, periods that live on impassioned recollection of the past or rosy hopefulness about the future. In America of this generation we happen to be in a fallow period of the second sort, and it is reasonable to suppose that this eminently unsatisfactory condition may continue for two or three generations to come. What we



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

know as romantic Western Christianity is infallibly coming to an end, and there are few civilised men to watch its demise with regret. Yet the will to discover the best is strong in all of us, and in the sophisticated this will is always manifest in an exaggerated emphasis upon the importance of art.

Now art, of course, is important, but it is never important when it is taken in an important way. Art is important as a fact—as distinguished from a recollection or a hope—only when it is unconscious, that is to say, spontaneous. But art is seldom spontaneous when people talk about it; it is spontaneous when people live it—when the expression of happy life flows without let or hindrance into song or poetry or music or painting or sculpture. It is a pæan of accomplishment, as a man whistles when he is well content with the things of this world. It is the sign of a happy marriage between instinct and instinct's object. When it exists, it does not require discussion; it incites enjoyment. Like love and pleasure and the amenities of life, it is a by-product. It is a symbol of success.

The *naïveté* of the sophisticated is strikingly revealed in their exaggerated emphasis upon æsthetic values. They do not want to face the hard, unpleasant facts—that the period in which they happen to be living is ugly and balked. Their method of escape is the simple one of talking much about beauty. Of course, there is a certain charm in this; the wan vitality of tradition may be reflected in ancient cathedrals and noble, antiquated poems. The timelessness of classic forms can always be reaffirmed, and to

## ILLUSIONS *of the* SOPHISTICATED

some extent the old emotions may be rekindled. But the emotional satisfactions of feeding upon tradition are like thin tapers of light compared with the sunshine of creative living, to which art is a musical accompaniment. There is dignity and some pathos in the situation of the cultured and civilised, caught, as they are, in a crude era of the modern machine organisation and slave State. There is, too, illusion—the old illusion that the stuff of our dreams may soften the outlines of reality, may capture glamour just as the hunter traps birds. Yet before the inexorable facts of life the illusion, for all its kindliness and generous warmth, seems wholly naïve.

Closely connected with this self-deception about art, are the more conventional self-deceptions about progress and democracy. In these two instances the influence of social custom and structure is so subtle and persuasive that even to raise the question has in most quarters the flavour of heresy. Professor George Santayana has shown, in an admirable essay in his latest book, "Character and Opinion in the United States," how even so independent and fearless a mind as that of William James could not escape the *milieu* of Cambridge and America: "He seems to have felt sure," says Professor Santayana, "that certain thoughts and hopes—those familiar to a liberal Protestantism—were every man's true friends in life. This assumption would have been hard to defend if he or those habitually addressed had ever questioned it; yet his whole argument for voluntarily cultivating these beliefs rests on this assumption, that

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

they are beneficent." Yet of all the illusions which revolt the soul, the illusion of progress is the most trying, the illusion that mere chronology in time works automatically towards moral ends. This teleological superstition has been scorned by real thinkers in every age and in every country; that it happens to exist to-day, with more social compulsion than ever before, means merely that the real thinker is having a more difficult time of it. Indeed, his energies are almost wholly concerned in fighting a useless battle, for it is the sophisticated people, who are naturally his audience and his supporters, that cherish this illusion most strongly. The plain man often has his doubts about progress; frequently he is more of a genuine sceptic than are the educated.

Similarly with democracy, the illusion has social sanctions which are very difficult to resist. One has to be on one's guard here about definitions. As one understands democracy, one is a democrat; one believes in equality. But, in the words of Aristotle, "equality is just—but only between equals." The current theory of democracy, that the decision of fifty-one per cent has a sovereign virtue, must be rejected utterly. The notion that sovereignty, in the final analysis, rests anywhere but in individual volition, openly and freely arrived at; that government or the State or the Church or any other abstract institution has any final authority, that it has any other function than one of convenience, is as great a superstition as that of the divine right of kings. Yet one can search the highways and the by-ways before one can find the sophisticated person to agree with this.

## LOST *in the* CROWD

IF a social psychologist should take the trouble to compute the amount of time that the average citizen of any big American city spends as a member of one or another kind of crowd, he would get a vivid sense of the importance of his own subject: and at the same time he would quickly realise how unscientific and speculative that subject still is. Experimental psychology, educational psychology, neurology, psychiatry, reaction-time to pain, and so on—all seem to be commendably disciplined sciences in comparison with the vague and nebulous field of phenomena called social psychology. Yet it is precisely this vague and nebulous field which is of primary importance for the humanist. It is man reacting as a whole, and not in parts, which is the humanist's first consideration; and it is just there that the social psychologist, in spite of the regrettably elementary nature of his science, can help him most. For in considering the modern man as a whole, the first thing that strikes a dispassionate observer is the fact that he lives as an individual only about one-twentieth of his waking, conscious life. The other nineteen-twentieths he spends as a member of a crowd. Personal individuality is almost completely smothered; indeed with a few more mechanistic developments in our modern civilisation it may some day be smothered altogether.

Consider, for example, the average city-man's



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

daily routine. He gets up, let us say, at eight. He shaves and washes his teeth, using a standardised razor and soap and tooth-brush. He gets into standardised clothes and eats a more or less standardised breakfast. Then he comes to his office by train or subway, reading his morning newspaper; which again hundreds of thousands of others are doing at that same moment of time. In one sense, his newspaper is just another crowd to which he belongs. At his office he goes through the routine of his business, sharing the crowd-assumptions of the organisation of which he is a part, and in general sharing the wider assumptions of the whole business-world in which his particular organisation functions. After a hasty lunch eaten with the crowd he goes back to the afternoon routine; and then goes home with the crowd, reading his evening newspaper the while. Possibly after dinner he goes to a show, to his lodge, or to a friendly game of poker with the boys.

Thus he spends the larger part of the day as a member of a crowd; but this fact barely begins to tell the story. When he is alone, or when for a moment or two he stumbles on the curb, day-dreaming and not keenly aware of his immediate environment, his mind is full of crowd-assumptions, snatches of propaganda from his newspaper, dramatisations of himself before certain crowds; and if the average city-man once gave an honest introspective account of his own stream of consciousness, he would be astonished at how little of that stream is his personal own, and how much of it is contributed by the crowds which press upon him from all sides.

## LOST *in the* CROWD

While man is largely a social animal, he was never meant to be as social as all this. Somehow or other, human individuality must peep through the smothering blanket of modern crowds; and what is happening to-day is a curious and dangerous exemplification of this ancient truth. Curious, because man is making use of the very thing that is crushing him; dangerous, because he is not making a success of it.

Before 1914 it would perhaps have been difficult to make it clear how modern man is using the crowd to give vent to those very dispositions of which society as a whole must disapprove. Fortunately the experiences of the war and of the period of intensive propaganda since the war, make the assertion appear less paradoxical to-day. It is a thesis that social psychologists, for example so able a writer as Mr. Everett Dean Martin, are increasingly emphasising. Investigation has not gone far yet, but the importance of further investigation and research can not be underestimated.

Briefly, the facts appear to be something thus: The anti-social dispositions in man, the crude sexual waywardnesses and anarchial aggressiveness, for instance, are ordinarily disciplined by the civilised environment and by teaching; the result of which is to push them back into the unconscious where they take their revenge, innocently in the form of dreams, and savagely in the form of sudden pathological outbursts. This is fairly familiar; the strain of balked dispositions created by modern civilisation is to-day a well-worn theme. In contrast to these wild anti-social impulses are usually set the so-called social dis-



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

positions; to gain prestige in the community; to be well thought of; to build a family; to rise in one's profession; to take part in public affairs; and so on. Society, groups, clubs, nations, communities are then pictured as organisations which perform the double function of stimulating these social dispositions in man and of furnishing the means through which these aroused dispositions can find satisfaction. It is conventional to call a man civilised when the second group of dispositions has developed power enough to hold the first group in check. Society, and the groups into which society naturally divides itself, are supposed to furnish the most efficacious aid in stimulating man to develop such power. The strain of the balked dispositions is then supposed somehow to disappear into thin air, to have been civilised away; or in our modern jargon, sublimated.

The war and its aftermath have clearly shown us that this analysis is much too simple. The anti-social dispositions manage to break through in spite of all; and the amazing thing is that they break through by using a crowd as the means of their expression. For example, to think of the nation as a whole is to be social in a large and wholesome way; yes, but in time of war, thinking of the nation as a whole becomes translated into entirely different terms. It is to hate the enemy and to release vicariously all those fugitive sadistic impulses which ordinarily are kept decently hidden. Again, to act as part of the crowd in a lynching party is a social act, in so far as one is associated with many people in the enter-

## LOST *in the* CROWD

prise; but it also releases the most anti-social impulses imaginable.

These, it will be demurred, are extreme cases. To be sure; yet they illustrate graphically the principle in question. More and more as one studies the subject, does it become clear that propaganda, reform, standardisation, intolerance are all parts of the same sort of thing—the use of the crowd to give vent to dispositions which in themselves deserve to be called anti-social. To a certain extent this has always happened in human history; it has been a way of balancing repression with release; but never has this principle been so ubiquitous and insidious as it is to-day. The fanatic speaking for his small minority, a crowd of which he is an important part, and attempting to impose the views and dogma of that minority on everybody else by weapon or by threat, enjoys the warm glow of the social approval of his group along with the personal satisfaction which comes from releasing his personal impulses towards cruelty. The ordinary man reading his newspaper and chuckling over some unfair attack on a politician who belongs to the party for which he does not vote, is undergoing the same kind of psychological process.

Now, the dangerous side of this method of finding release for certain dispositions does not, as we might at first suppose, lie in the fact of the release itself. Until we find a more civilised way of handling them, the bottled-up dispositions of man towards aggression and anarchy will be periodically drained away in wars. War has that indubitable psychological function; and we have never squarely faced the prob-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

lem of finding its moral equivalent. The deeper danger in this method of releasing certain dispositions is that the creative impulses, too, are under a strain in modern life; and they, too, find their vent through the medium of the crowd instead of through the expression of human personality.

This, it seems to us, is the underlying reason for the deeper dissatisfaction of man with modern civilisation. Increasingly the only method he can employ for the expression of his individuality is through the crowd. He must use an instrument which in a sense is a denial of his original purpose. To express his individuality he must employ the very thing that is by nature designed to smother it. It is a dilemma that our modern form of civilisation has posed for us, by accident rather than design. But it is a dilemma that we must somehow resolve if the spiritual integrity of the individual man is to be preserved.

## *An* INTELLECTUAL EGGSHELL PERIOD

THE steadily progressing relegation in this country of the lusts of the body to a furtive subterranean life—the climax of the neo-Puritan régime under which we live before, as we hope, the inevitable reaction comes upon us—has had disastrous social consequences; this will hardly be denied. Healthy sexual impulses have been transformed into a back-of-the-barn sort of an affair; natural laziness, the deep instinctive contempt for work as such and the necessary forerunner to the play, or creative impulse, has become a sin against the modern spirit; the drinking of wine, an amiable and glorious tradition, has been ignominiously thrust into the environment of what is graphically and accurately known as a blind pig; the impulse of anger and belligerency has been drained away by a ridiculous emphasis upon physical training of the set, mechanical type and by games which have little of the sting of adventure left in them. Santayana a few years ago diagnosed the case correctly when he said that the true symptom of the anæmia of the age was its emphasis upon virility—and ironically enough, at a time when most of Europe is suffering from malnutrition, never in America has the preoccupation with physical well-being been so great. It greets us daily in the street-cars with their eternal indigestion-cure advertisements; in the news-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

papers with their page displays of how life may be extended; in the interminable interest in interstitial and other glands and in frequent stories of how run-down men of sixty can be changed into frolicsome colts of twenty-five. It would require a diligent statistician to enumerate the different brands of tooth-paste, the thousands of new styles of soap, the long list of patent antiseptics. We want to acquire life, as we acquire possessions. We are afraid of dirt; afraid of disease; afraid of death. We are afraid even of morbidity. And most of all we are afraid of unleashing any of those natural impulses of the body which, by the merest unhappy chance, might lead even remotely to any of those things. Yet to be so afraid of disease and death, almost hysterically afraid as we are, is at bottom only to be afraid of life itself. The coward, says a Japanese proverb, dies many deaths, the brave man only one. Our modern psycho-analysts can tell us a pretty story of the many American neurotics they have to treat for this more fatal disease of anticipatory extinction.

Now, this exaggerated emphasis upon health, with its invariable concomitant of an iron discipline over what are regarded as the wayward impulses of the body (a similar discipline was the precursor of Sparta's downfall), is always the stigma of true anæmia as it is the first characteristic of Puritanism. True health is joyous and reckless, it comes from plunging fearlessly into life; it has little relation to our contemporary specious well-being that is but a life-long grovelling before bacilli. Above all, Puritanism loves to hide its terror of joy and natural



## *An* INTELLECTUAL EGGSHELL PERIOD

animal gaiety behind the arras of Anglo-Saxon humanitarianism and an intense regard for future generations—a regard, by the way, biologically suspicious in itself, since those races which have given little or no thought to the welfare of future generations seem to have produced the most numerous and the most healthy progeny. But the point here is that this shivering, corn-fed timidity before the joyous waywardness and gaiety of life dominates in American culture and social manners to-day. It may be inwardly weak, as we believe it is; yet it occupies the strategic position in our contemporary civilisation. Able to set the social standards, it keeps the majority of the populace (which secretly despises these arrogant minorities) screwed up to a kind of verbal and external obedience. That is the inevitable price we have to pay for still living under the pioneer tradition, where to go against the tribal sanctions was, as it still is, the ultimate sin. Because such uniformity was a pragmatic necessity in the early days of our national life, we are still to-day—when conditions are so rapidly changing—content to be led around by the nose by these self-appointed dictators of national morals. Sooner or later there will be a reaction against them.

For fundamentally, so we think, the American temperament (as distinguished from the purely Anglo-Saxon temperament) is not of this morbid, timorous, Puritanical, conformistic strain at all—life would be intolerable, if we were so pessimistic as to have to think so. Puritanism of the kind that rules us to-day came from the fens and dour marshes

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

of Prussia, from a land of fog and brutality and no joy. It acquired certain hypocritical twists in its passage through the British Isles, although it has never changed its basic character. But it is a quality of thought and life really not adapted to the American environment and temperament at all, and only a sort of deliquescent pioneer docility, so to speak, gives it its temporary strangle-hold. We are a land of sunshine and plenty; a land of sparkling, electrical air; a land of many strains of blood, quickly transforming themselves in the amalgam into a type quite distinct from the Anglo-Saxon (just as the American Indian, originally Mongolian, soon became a distinct type). Give us half a chance, and we like nothing better than to laugh and play and be gay. We have abundant vitality, if the truth were known; it is just an historical anachronism that to-day we are ruled by the anæmic, the feminine, and the fearful.

But where then, in this unpleasant transition period, does our vitality express itself, cramped and thwarted as it is? Subterraneously, as we have said, on its more joyous side. Into business and the making of money on its aggressive side, although here too a great deal of romantic nonsense is talked about the "intense" American business man, for business is almost as much a game with us as golf or baseball. On its darker side, it goes into lynching and violence of all kinds. And on the side of plain neurology, if one likes, a great deal of real energy is consumed in gum-chewing, rocking-chair ecstasy, and "jazz." Pitiful substitutes, to be sure, and often

## *An* INTELLECTUAL EGGSHELL PERIOD

unpleasant ones from the purely medical point of view, as any honest psychiatrist can tell us. Yet proof, too, that all vitality has not been quite vacuum-cleaned out of us by the moralists. The very energy of our contemporary adulation of our anæmia is proof—well, proof, paradoxically, that the vitality to destroy it is still there.

But none of this thwarted energy—and it is a very melancholy thing to reflect upon—gets into our intellectual life. With us it was a natural pioneer tradition that to be interested in the life of reason was in itself rather feminine and sissified. We are far from having finished with what Mr. Van Wyck Brooks has so aptly called the apotheosis of the low-brow. And for the next generation of young men, who will still in all probability be living under the tyranny of anæmia, the outlook is particularly black. Balzac had a very fine phrase to describe a period through which every young man ought to go, the period of *nostalgie de la boue*. Where, however, will this next generation turn when this period of late adolescence comes upon it? There will be no mud, only Y. M. C. A.'s and Chautauquas—and back-of-the-barn. The healthy and vigorous will turn to the subterranean expression of their vitality, the only expression vouchsafed them. The censorship and the social conventions will prevent any of this vitality finding its natural vent in literature or in art, where it might be lifted into rhyme and colour, as youth, when let alone, is usually eager to have it. Those who have the very vitality most needed for the true life of the mind will be shame-faced and

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

secretive and furtive about those very impulses, which, if they but understood them, did them the most credit. Consequently the intellectual life of the nation will be left to the colourless, the timid, and the weak. It will be a period of *preciosité* and dilettantism in a bad sense—that is, a period arising not as a kind of reaction to too sturdy vitality (like the *fin de siècle* period in the France of Baudelaire and Verlaine) but from a shrinking before the facts of life. It will be thin and brittle, like an eggshell easily cracked, but an eggshell without an egg, either rotten or sound, inside it, an eggshell covering an intellectual void.

## A QUESTION *of* MORALS

THE unsuspecting foreigner in these parts might plausibly imagine that the "Make Your Own" signs increasingly displayed in our grocery shops are one side of a jovial campaign by manufacturers of cigarette paper to get smokers to roll their own. And if he picks up one of our weekly sporting papers, attracted by the girls in the one-piece bathing suits on the cover, he will, when he reads the following advertisement, be impressed at our regard for national hygiene:

### STILLS! STILLS!

We can furnish you a Pure Copper Distilling Outfit, complete and ready for use that is ideal for the home, garage or laboratory. This is the most practical still ever devised and will last a life-time. Capacity, one gallon. Suitable for distillation of any kind of liquid. It has plenty of space for boiling and with a slow fire will produce distilled liquids at the rate of two quarts an hour. Auto-owners need them to distil water for batteries. Distilled water is the best safeguard against "flu," fevers and other diseases.

There is never any mention of alcohol as such, and the foreigner must know that this is a prohibition country where intoxicating liquors are forbidden not by any mere local-option mandate, but by the supreme law of the land. The native American may put his tongue in his cheek and look knowingly out of the corner of his left eye when he reads this sum-



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

mons to a sanitary life; in fact, he often emits loud guffaws. The foreigner, of course, will have to attribute such performances to our peculiar sense of humour; on the surface, these are all excessively moral and law-abiding advertisements, and he ought to be duly impressed. He usually is.

Indeed our surface-morality is the most impressive thing about us; it might be said to be our peculiar contribution to the ethical schemes of the world. Nowhere as in America and Great Britain has the technique of the formal and public adherence to virtue been so highly developed. When Mayor Gaynor tackled the problem of prostitution in New York City, with his customary frankness and gift for *le mot juste*, he coined the phrase "the outward semblance of order and decency." It was brutal but revealing. For if there is one common characteristic of Anglo-Saxon morality, wherever and whenever it appears, it is this: On no account admit anything, on no account be found out, on no account let anything become public. If Germany had not been so unsophisticated in international diplomacy, she would never have admitted that she did wrong in violating the neutrality of Belgium; the proper attitude was to have pointed out the special moral benefits which accrued to Belgium in particular and the world in general, by her action. Anglo-Saxon diplomacy has long since learned the trick of acting the rôle of a shocked saviour of civilisation, whenever it is up to some exceptionally underhanded deal, and although we are comparatively new at the game, we have taken our elementary course of instruction under

## A QUESTION of MORALS

the Wilson régime. But at all costs, the outward semblance of order and decency must be preserved. Although, in defiance of certain Constitutional Amendments, the negro is robbed of his suffrage rights in the South, we must always be sure to speak of how the Civil War freed the slaves, and never refer to Lincoln except as the Great Emancipator. Although, in defiance of a later Constitutional Amendment, liquor is still made, sold and consumed, we must always speak of the prohibition issue as closed; or, as Mr. Bryan has phrased it, as dead as slavery. Although in no country is what is euphemistically termed sexual irregularity more widely practised than in America, we still continue to idealise our women on the covers of our popular magazines; and although in no country is the conversation of men alone more direct and vulgar, we still subsidise organisations whose sole task is to deodourise our books and plays and moving-pictures. Indeed, cynics have said that we are too anæmic in our impulses to take natural waywardnesses simply and frankly, and we are compelled to make them publicly forbidden in order to render them secretly attractive.

But this sharp dichotomy between profession and practice, which is so characteristic of Anglo-Saxon morality and which other civilisations invariably term hypocritical, does not, in our opinion, spring from any native weakness of impulse towards the world, the flesh and the devil. On the contrary, those impulses are too often embarrassingly vigorous, and the public prohibition of any open manifes-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

tation of them is a symbol of our fear of letting ourselves go. Our morality system has become a mechanical device for protecting us against ourselves; it is the handiwork of terror. Rather does the dichotomy between profession and practice spring from a false conception of the good life; from an elementary but persistent confusion of real ethical values. If that confusion were merely a mistake in thinking, a mere intellectual defect of our temperament, there would be no particular point in being upset about it. But unfortunately it is of very great practical importance. Increasingly our civilisation is becoming hysterical, because of the inner strain which this false dualism produces; increasingly the younger generation is being poisoned in its attitude towards the joyous things of life; increasingly we are all losing the capacity for trusting ourselves. More and more our civilisation is becoming not a civilisation of free men but of moral cowards.

Now, the false conception which has brought about this unpleasant state of things really goes back to the doctrine of original sin, especially to Calvin. If the early 18th century romanticists erred in believing that mankind was a goddess in petticoats, the modern Puritans, who set the tone of our Anglo-Saxon morality, more certainly err in believing mankind a devil in a strait-jacket. But the problem is really neither one of taking off the petticoats nor multiplying the chains on the strait-jacket; the quarrel over the question of whether man is naturally good or naturally bad, is futile and unreal. Man is naturally a bundle of different dispositions; and the ethical

## A QUESTION of MORALS

problem, so far as it can be said to exist at all, is how to focus the chief of those dispositions on objects which shall bring about the greatest amount of harmony among these dispositions rather than the greatest amount of disharmony. This has a suspiciously simple sound, yet as a matter of fact not even an approach to the problem can be made as long as the doctrine persists that what one really wants to do must in the nature of things be evil. That is the contemporary Anglo-Saxon official doctrine, and it is not merely false, but positively dangerous. What one wants to do can be adjudged good or bad only by virtue of the consequences; in itself, such a want or desire has only a subjective and flickering meaning; one can not even define it in ethical terms until it has been projected outward into the objective world and there set in motion. True restraint, to sum up the whole objection, comes not from the eternal No of negation and passivity, but from the eternal Yes of affirmation and activity. It springs not from the checking of desire but from the abundance of it.

This is hard doctrine to make clear, for it runs directly counter to social conventions and normal ethical assumptions. Nietzsche, for example, struggled long to make this conception understandable; as when he said in his "Anti-Christ" that the real sin was to give out of a sense of charity, when the only truly ethical way was to give out of an abundance. Yet even he, for all the sharp vividness of his epigrams and the flashing insight of what some one has called ecstatic common-sense, never fully



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

succeeded; and we ourselves are only vain enough to hope that we can throw out a suggestion or two. In the simple case of robbery, for instance, the man who does not pick my pocket because he is terrified at the thought of a possible prison-sentence, would hardly, even in Anglo-Saxon countries, be thought an object of high ethical approval. So far as any question of moral praise or blame goes, it will apply only to the man to whom such an action would never naturally occur, even under the stress of great want and hardship. Here we can begin to see that it is not so much a problem of struggling against our desires, as a problem of what desires we have. Yet apply the parallel further, to chastity, for instance: The chastity which is the by-product of timidity, fear of adventure, terror of disease, shrinking from social penalties—is it not precisely this kind of chastity which the sanctions of our society tend to produce in the normal young man? One could hardly deny it. Nor could one deny that chastity of this kind is morally not worth a great deal, that in fact it is somewhat despicable. The only kind that has any real ethical value is that which comes naturally as a by-product to some other more absorbing passion or interest. Here once more one can say that true restraint comes not from the checking of desire but from the abundance of it; not from any denial of life, but from some deeper sense of life's richness and fulness. However, this is a conclusion from the general course of Anglo-Saxon morals, large enough to need a treatise to itself.



## AU-DESSOUS *de la* MELEE

"EVEN what is best in American life is compulsory—the idealism, the zeal, the beautiful unison of its great moments," writes George Santayana in his new book, "Character and Opinion in the United States." And this perceiving and discriminating critic goes on to imply that in the intellectual life of this country, too, the dice of thought is loaded; loaded in favour of Protestant morality.

Now, in spite of the sound justice in this observation—and who would have the temerity to challenge it?—the chief compulsion in our intellectual life, as it actually exists to-day, might be described as the moral obligation to be optimistic. In a prosperous, expanding, self-confident, Western civilisation such as our own, this unspoken compulsion has, of course, a certain utility-value. The tone of ordinary social intercourse could hardly rest on any other set of assumptions without unsettling the whole fabric of relationships. But this command to be optimistic is more subtly pervasive. Art and literature wither in too persistently fruitful a sun, yet in America they must keep for ever in this prosperous noon-day glare. Indeed, it is becoming necessary to exert considerable imaginative effort even to envisage the free-functioning, disinterested intelligence or the curious and nonpartisan sensibility, responsive alike to grief and joy.

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

Walking through any of the chief streets of New York City one of these brilliant October days—by far the most glorious month in New York's calendar, when the very air is electric with energy and life—one finds it hard to think of a man deliberately cutting himself from all this effulgence of life, yet the afternoon newspapers tell of MacSwiney's death in headline after headline on the sun-flecked stands. How can one deliberately die when there are these blue waters of the Hudson, these eager, bright, girlish forms, the towering strength of these buildings still to be seen and responded to? It is like sending a funeral cortège through a carnival street, gay with flags and bunting. What inner light serene can have the power to make all these physical beauties black and miasmatic beside a more enduring radiance? These are disturbing questions for Americans. We shrug our shoulders and walk briskly up the Avenue. *Our* life is not like that; we have so many things to live for, so many fine things.

It is this mood we seek to perpetuate in our literature and our art, although of course it is but one mood out of the many that life gives us, and perhaps the one not most permanent. No matter; our editors, our playwrights, our artists, our philosophers and sociologists must keep it going, must make it eternal. It is the mood of progress, of idealism, of conviction that things matter; the mood of zealous success. It is the American intellectual compulsion, strong and unquestioned. Our young men from college come into the world with an optimistic assumption so firmly entrenched that even

## AU-DESSOUS *de la* MELEE

senseless war, pestilence, or famine could hardly withstand it. It is a kind of by-product of the materialistically triumphant machine-era, buttressed by a falsely Darwinian theory of the inevitability of progress, flattered by the philosophers, secured by the *naïveté* of a youthful people still certain, not only that human happiness is attainable, but actually existent. That is why the Oriental, with his implacable Eastern tolerance, seems to have a curiously amused expression in his eyes when he talks to us—a bit as if he were talking with impetuous children, who were yet to learn the vanity of all things. And he smiles even broadly when he reflects that Christianity, in essence an Eastern, un-worldly religion, is officially our faith.

Intellectually speaking, of course, there are no *a priori* reasons to justify optimistic conclusions about the world we live in—or pessimistic either, for that matter. It is a question of the evidence. But although the one sure fact in life is death and dissolution, the bias of our thought is always conditioned by the will-to-live. We shrink back in fright from too ruthless a view of our own frail mortality; we neglect when we do not despise the man who would constantly recall it to us; we cling with pathetic eagerness to mystical nostrums and superstitions that assure us of our eternal continuance. We dare not face the prospect of annihilation.

This boundless faith, this complacency about what life has to offer us, naturally comports very well with the physical opportunities of our existence. It rein-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

forces, as it were, our national prosperity. It makes for clean cities, cheerful countenances, health. Our very funerals are pageants, for we will not let ourselves know the meaning of grief. We will not believe that sorrow and suffering may come through any other agency than our own remedial weaknesses; there is nothing in the nature of the world itself that makes them inevitable.

But art and literature can not flourish in such an atmosphere. They are strange flowers that can not blossom in too rich a soil, nor can they flourish when the soil is too poor. Our American soil is far too rich; it can produce only lush, quick-growing, quick-dying vegetation. Compare, for instance, the very best of our serious novels with, say, Dostoevsky's "Possessed," or "Crime and Punishment" (books, by the way, which the younger generation of American writers seems just to be discovering.) It is as if we had been living only half a life; we are suddenly taken *au-dessous de la mêlée*, as it were, to the rich, dim, uncertain, fantastic world—but none the less real—underlying that of the ordinary, thin crust of everyday consciousness. It is a world where the values we most cling to in public become utterly meaningless; where pain has an introspective value; sorrow, a perceptive illumination of experience which make their cost disproportionate to their intrinsic worth.

—But our own literature and art have not yet ceased to be in the battle; they have not yet learned how to get below the surface of things. Nor will they

## AU-DESSOUS *de la* MELEE

until our optimistic compulsion has been destroyed, until in the world of the spirit and of the mind we find that there is one moral obligation and only one: to tell the truth as we honestly see and feel it. Then only will our intellectual life be truly free.



## COMMON SENSE *About* FRANCE

ONE of the saddest results of any new international alliance is the propaganda-literature which inevitably accompanies the diplomatic marriage. Something of the sort was discernible in England as early as the beginnings of the Entente, back in King Edward's time. From despising French characteristics, popular sentiment swung over to imitating them, ending, when the war came, in positive adulation; as Mr. Dell says, "frivolous" and "immoral" France became "a sort of hermaphrodite deity made up of Joan d'Arc and M. Clemenceau." But this change of opinion was mild compared with the violent uprooting of old prejudices and the complacent ignorance of France when we ourselves entered the war. On the French side, the worst kind of chauvinist propagandists—M. Bergson is a case in point—although, as a matter of fact, he is not fundamentally French in his point of view—were sent to America to convince us of the eternal justice of her cause, and in spite of a few temporary aberrations about French militarism and the like, they seem to have captured Mr. Wilson securely. On our side, equally stupid and uninformed publicists and journalists invaded the coasts of our unsuspecting ally, and sent home glowing accounts of *la belle France* and the immortal *poilu*. Camouflage became a popular word. Then,

## COMMON SENSE *About* FRANCE

without mercy, came the books—histories of France, explanations of the Alsace-Lorraine quarrel, the deep-dyed villainy of M. Cailloux, the martial vigour of the Frenchman coupled with a complete lack of the military spirit, *feuilletons*, apologetics, travelogues for the Chautauquas, in short, a very depressing flood of print.

Perhaps all the more depressing since although it is nowhere more difficult to make two races understand each other than when introducing Anglo-Saxons and Latins to each other, at the same time we most need to know the better qualities of the French people. Our civilisation, and this is even truer of America than of England, can learn more from France than from almost any other country. Yet we cannot learn anything at all unless, along with our being made acquainted with her great qualities, we are at the same time made acquainted with her weaknesses. In this respect, indeed, the French are particularly open to misunderstanding. The first thing to learn is that there is not merely one homogeneous France; there is the France of the peasant, of the proletariat, of the bourgeoisie. And there is Paris and the various provincial regions. Not only that, in the individual Frenchman there are paradoxical opposites which are extremely hard to reconcile: for example, closeness, even stinginess, side by side with great generosity; high intelligence, scepticism, and rationality, coupled with a rather childish love of fine phrases and the tendency to run after *la gloriole*; a deep contempt for politicians coincident with a mystical readiness to lay down one's life for

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

*la patrie*; a deep conservatism in the major things along with a fine iconoclasm towards historical traditions and what are known in other countries as the conventions; an unerring fineness of taste in artistic things at the very moment when they shock their Anglo-Saxon brethren by a frankness at the facts of life. But beneath all these contradictions run two unending streams of French character, intellectual sincerity and the readiness to face facts, the two points, in truth, on which these people can teach us the most. Perhaps nowhere is this basic French good sense better illustrated than in a contrast between President Wilson and M. Clemenceau. Equally with the President, the former French Premier's conception of *la victoire* was sentimental and romantic, utterly divorced from economic realities. But when it was all over, when he had got what, as he confessed, he had waited forty years to obtain, did the French Premier indulge in rhodomontade about the heart of the world being broken, if the treaty were not immediately ratified? He did not. His French good sense reasserted itself. He coolly stated that the "victory" was only a Pyrrhic victory after all.

I know of no recent book which gives a better picture of the French people as they really are, both of their lovable and unpleasant qualities, nor of the economic and political and intellectual life of present day France than that by Mr. Robert Dell, "My Second Country."

The author is peculiarly equipped for his task. His early boyhood love for France led him in time to

## COMMON SENSE *About* FRANCE

make it his second country, and for many years he was the Paris correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, which post he held during the war almost to the end, when his exposure of the Austrian peace offer of 1917 made him *persona non grata* to M. Clemenceau, who was instrumental in bringing about his expulsion, which now will probably soon be—if it has not already been—rescinded. He is thoroughly acquainted with all classes of French people, and those impulsive critics who have taken umbrage at some of his strictures on French institutions and methods ought to recall his own words in his introduction to this book:

The more I know the French people the fonder I become of them. Like all human beings, they have the defects of their qualities, but they have one quality which makes them the most charming people in the world to live with—they understand the art of living.

Mr. Dell's criticisms spring not from malice but from deep affection and from the desire to see the best in French life endure; possibly, also, from an honesty before facts which sooner or later comes to be second nature with all who spend many years among the French people. Yet this temperamental sympathy and intelligent, discriminating liking, are not his only equipment. He has as well enormous intellectual vitality; his style is of firm texture—one feels he would be an incomparable *raconteur*—and has acquired something of the incisive clarity, combined with subtlety and wit, so characteristic of the best French prose. He can be gay without being



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

meaninglessly vivacious, and profoundly critical without being portentous. For example, discussing the fact that the majority of French Catholics are not really religious in spirit at all, but look upon the Church as a convenient social and political institution (in later years, unhappily as the best ally of reaction), he remarks:

The Franciscans in the Middle Ages started the convenient theory that one heard mass in a Franciscan church, if one arrived before the '*Ite, missa est,*' with which it concludes, and thereby filled their churches to the detriment of the parish churches and the indignation of the secular clergy. This theory must still have partisans in France, for on any Sunday morning one may see large numbers of men arriving at the Madeleine just before the end of the eleven o'clock High Mass. They wait at the bottom of the church to watch the women go out, and very agreeable acquaintances, I am told, have often been made in this way. The English Catholic is a very different person from the Catholic of a Catholic country: he takes the whole thing seriously, as Æneas Piccolomini (afterwards Pius II) said with contemptuous pity of the Irish of his day. The Catholic of a Catholic country—at any rate in France and Italy—is always exercising his ingenuity to sail as near the wind as possible—to get around the laws of the Church or to discover the least that he can possibly do to comply with them. He has the valuable aid of the moral theologians, who have, for instance, decided in France that a water-fowl is fish and may, therefore, be eaten on a day of abstinence. So the wealthy French Catholic, whose delight it is to dine as sumptuously as he possibly can on a Friday without breaking the laws of the Church, eats wild duck with a clear conscience.

Politically, Mr. Dell is a Socialist, but this classification should be taken with reservations. Nothing is more confusing to the foreign observer in France



## COMMON SENSE *About* FRANCE

than the various political divisions; one ought, indeed, to be provided with an advance terminology before attempting to pass judgment, and Mr. Dell furnishes this in his excellent chapter, "Socialism, Syndicalism, and State Capitalism." The latter term, indeed is what is called in France and Belgium *étatisme*, for which no adequate English word exists. The French from their sad experience with State monopolies—tobacco, matches, the postal service, purchase of the Western Railway—are disillusioned about the kind of nationalisation which would be under the control of a government bureaucracy; monopolies are in essence the same whether under capitalistic or socialistic control; they have the consumer at their mercy and end inevitably in economic slavery. It was partly the result of the experience with State monopolies, partly disgust with parliamentary palliative reforms, which led to the Syndicalist revolt in France—in Mr. Dell's opinion a healthy corrective of mere parliamentarianism and a step in the right direction towards preparing the proletariat to use power "if and when it could get it." Syndicalism, in a word, can never come to terms with State Socialism, but, according to this author, "its differences with Revolutionary Socialism are entirely concerned with questions of method and can easily be adjusted especially now when the majority of Socialists in France have abandoned all hope of effecting anything important by parliamentary action."

This contempt of parliamentary methods arises not merely from scepticism about political democ-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

racy, but as much from the stupidity of the bourgeoisie which exercises an administrative dictatorship, increasingly galling not alone to the city proletariat but as well to the peasant who more and more must find that a policy of protection, favouring the farmers, will not enable him in the long run to compete with foreign agricultural competition on modern lines. The scandal of import duties on food when France cannot produce enough for herself cannot last forever. Yet, as Mr. Dell admits in his chapter, "Small Property and Its Results," it is still doubtful in case of a revolution whether the peasant would throw his influence on the side of the proletariat rather than the bourgeoisie. In the latter class our author finds the real hope of a revolution which will unseat the present bourgeois dictatorship as the old *ancien régime* was upset when it blindly refused to make the necessary concessions. Indeed, in Mr. Dell's opinion it is doubtful if any concessions now can save the bourgeoisie; France is rushing headlong to financial bankruptcy, if the present policy of military expansion and attempt to make France a great industrial nation is persisted in—as it unfortunately seems to be persisted in. Of course one does not have to agree with all this, but it is a relief to have the facts put so cogently and to find a writer who is not afraid to risk his intellectual reputation by stating what he considers to be the possibilities. At all events, the reader is given ample material to make his own judgments.

But whatever one's agreement or disagreement with Mr. Dell politically or economically, there will

## COMMON SENSE *About* FRANCE

be few to challenge his cultural judgment. The true France, he says echoing the words of their greatest writer of the 19th century, is the France of Voltaire and Montesquieu, the sceptical, the rationalist, the anti-religious, the intellectualistic France. France may have her romantic reactions—her Rousseaus and Chateaubriands and her modern Bergsons and mystics—but she always goes back to the older tradition. With the disillusion resulting from the war and the ensuing peace, the younger France is ready for a rationalistic revival. “*‘Il le faut, tu ne sauras pas,’* say religion and patriotism. They reply: ‘We will not; we will know.’” And if that spirit conquers, France may yet return, repudiating her present leaders, to her true rôle—the leader and the originator, in the Western world, of civilised ideas and the art of living.

## OVERDONE

LONDON, 6 Aug.—According to the latest information the British Government has accepted the Bolshevik note insisting on a separate peace with Poland and promising to attend the London conference subsequently on the conditions they have laid down. The truth is, Premier Lloyd George had no option, for any proposal to go to war for the Poles against Russia would have been repudiated by the country. The Labour party, to make sure no such enterprise can be undertaken, has summoned an urgent conference of trades-union and other bodies to meet in London Monday, and in the meantime has issued a manifesto protesting in the strongest terms against the support of Poland. —From the *New York World*, 7 August, 1920.

With one suggestive aspect of this dispatch—the frank assumption regarding the location of power, even political power, in the modern State—we are not here concerned. There is another equally suggestive aspect. This news-item is not hidden away in an obscure corner of the paper, nor is it under a correspondent's signature, when a certain margin of editorial interpretation of the news is considered admissible. It is an anonymous "straight" news-item printed on the first page, right hand edge or feature-column. It is not a dispatch recording the specific words of unimportant foreign ministers or obscure but hopeful Generals. It is meant to be a simple statement of the actual facts, without propaganda-bias one way or the other. It is meant to be reporting and nothing but reporting. The *World* did not

## OVERDONE

shudder with editorial horror at this perverse affection of the mass and file of British labour for the success of the Bolsheviki against Poland and bury the dispatch beneath department store advertisements—it set it down as a fact, and as an important fact. In this instance at all events, whatever the editors of the newspapers may have thought, they conceived of their function as one of giving their readers the news. They went on the democratic assumption that their readers could form their own opinions for themselves if they wanted to. They evidently suspected that the public might be somewhat tired of propaganda.

The truth is, the public is extremely tired of it. Propaganda has been overdone. It has been so much overdone that even those who would most like to employ it are somewhat dubious of its efficiency at the present moment. Nothing could be more amusing or naïve than many of the special dispatches from Washington of the same week in which this dispatch was printed. The hard facts of the situation are that the bulk of people in the United States are heartily sick of Europe and all its works at the present time; that, ostrich-like as it may be (as a few excited bankers are trying now to convince us), they would like to forget the late affray and get back as far as possible “to normal,” that the sending of troops to Poland on a large scale “is unthinkable.” The people of the country are not the least little bit frightened by the “menace of bolshevism” at the present moment. The menace of the Hun was so overworked during the war, the menace of the Red was so far overdone during the year following the



## AMERICA and the YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

armistice, that it takes a powerful lot of preparation and publicity to start any new menace as a going concern. This is distressing to the statesmen at the head of the Government, embarrassing in fact. "The preservation of the Polish independence," says a dispatch from Washington to the *New York Times* of 7 August, "is the immediate concern of President Wilson and his principal advisers. But they are embarrassed by their inability to take any positive action that will turn the scales in Poland's favour." "Embarrassed" is eminently correct. In one sense, it is literally true as one Associated Press item of that week stated, that the peril to civilisation is greater to-day than in August, 1914; but oddly enough the people of America cannot seem to get at all het up about it.

What the gigantic intellects who are running the foreign affairs of this nation have unwittingly stumbled over is a law which, in the psychology of sensation, is generally known as the law of diminishing returns. Apply a strong stimulus frequently and the reaction to it becomes progressively weaker; apply it long enough, and all reaction disappears. Indeed, when pushed *a l'outrance*, it suddenly induces a reaction the exact opposite of what normally is to be expected. In America, the menace-stimulus has been applied about to a point where almost all reaction has disappeared; in France, in England, but above all in Italy it has been laid on so generously that the present reaction of the mass and file of those respective nations has undergone the inevitable psychological transformation from terror to positive

## OVERDONE

affection. In their enthusiasm at what they thought to have discovered as the infinite docility and suggestibility of the mob, the propaganda-experts of the modern political Governments lost sight of the sound old Greek maxim that to be continuously effective, what is necessary is moderation in all things. But they have been intemperate in their stirring up of hate, and are beginning to pay the penalty. They might have learned a lesson from the French Revolution but they did not. They might have remembered that the excessive—and necessary—loving of every citizen, those curious comrade-festivals in Paris where every one fell on every one else's neck and wept from sheer unadulterated affection, were the inevitable preliminary to the Terror and the guillotine. The publicity hate-experts made fools of themselves during the war and after, and the present benefit inures to Lenin and Trotsky. These latter, indeed, seem to have been extremely wary of falling into the same trap themselves, for whenever their more excitable apostles in other countries have too loudly sung the praises of the Bolshevik régime they have adroitly contrived to put on the soft pedal with rather a severe dose of unpleasant facts. They seem to have sensed that nothing would be ultimately more damaging to their prestige than a too rosy picture of Utopia by their idolaters in other lands.

Yet this practical revelation that there are psychological limitations to one kind of propaganda, when overdone, gives no warrant whatever for sentimental optimism about the native good sense of the masses of people. Common sense still remains the most un-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

common thing in the world; only geniuses seem to have a permanent monopoly of it. What has been revealed is that propaganda, to work all the time, has to be more sophisticated and skilful than the kind employed by the crude paid attorneys of the Allied nations and America. There, too, they may have to take a lesson in method from Moscow. The present state of affairs does not reveal that propaganda *per se* is ineffective, but only that it demands a subtler technique than customarily displayed. In a contest of wits in this matter the Bolsheviki may win; indeed, at the present time, they seem in a fair way of doing just that. For they have learned the great practical advantage of letting their opponents overdo things.

From the humanistic point of view this present propaganda-battle has certain amusing aspects. But the ultimate danger goes much deeper. It is no genuine comfort that here in America for example the great mass of people are really sick to death of idealistic phrases, and are suspicious of all "hate-drives." This is merely the indifference of exhausted gullibility. It is a fact that what we know as Western civilisation is in the crucible; that it actually may be destroyed within this generation, as it rapidly is being destroyed in certain parts of Central Europe to-day. It seems also a fact to us, even if Orientals might plausibly look quizzical, that Western civilisation has built up certain graciousnesses, expanded certain humane traditions, developed certain cultural amenities, which it would be a pity to have swept away in a bitter civil war over economic adjustment. But we are so tired of propaganda and lies and par-

## OVERDONE

tianship, so sick of newspaper-filth, that we prefer to avoid looking at the facts, prefer to be sceptical of all attempts at assessment. If we were not the victims of six years of just this kind of propaganda-battle, we should be busy thinking over our own civilisation, trying and assessing it, searching for its genuine values. We should be busy devising ways and means of preserving what we then thought might bear the ultimate test of the disinterested mind. Instead we are just drifting, letting the blind forces of events carry us where it will, even if it be to destruction.

For the one important loss of the war and the peace has been the loss of our greatest spiritual possession, intellectual integrity. We have so poisoned the environment that only the cynic or the paid attorney can survive without too great difficulty. The command now is, be indifferent to everything or be paid by somebody. We do not want, we do not welcome, we shall shortly cease even to understand, the disinterested mind. We suspect, and for the most part rightly suspect, everybody of having some secret axe to grind. We take nobody at his face value. We smell an ulterior purpose in everything. We have arranged things so that very soon intellectual integrity will become a positive disability, and the person possessing it a fit subject for the psychopathic ward. This is a mood far worse than active intolerance or positive error. It is a mood of low intellectual vitality; it is the aftermath of six years of overdoing.

## A DILAPIDATED SCARECROW

THERE is sound good sense in Mr. Owen Wister's plea that Americans forget to be self-righteous in judging England; after all it is a trifle absurd for us to call her a land-grabber with our own treatment of the native Indians and Mexicans a matter of historical record, and with our petty South American imperialisms to mock all our fine pretensions about self-determination. There is also sound good sense in his plea that we should remember that, except for a few misunderstandings—such as during the Civil War and the war of 1812, England has generally stood on our side in international quarrels, not, as Mr. Wister himself is careful to point out, because she loved us more, but because she loved other nations less. Yet in saying this much about Mr. Wister's new book, "A Straight Deal or The Ancient Grudge,"<sup>1</sup> one has said about all that can be said in favour of it. And even these two very sensible observations of Mr. Wister's are irrelevant to the central problem—the problem of how an Anglo-American war, the likelihood of which is treated all too frivolously by contemporary journalism, can be avoided.

It is quite true we have nothing to be particularly self-complacent about when we compare ourselves

<sup>1</sup> "A Straight Deal, or The Ancient Grudge." Owen Wister. New York. The Macmillan Company.



## A DILAPIDATED SCARECROW

with England; in fact, when we survey the domestic scene in both countries to-day the balance in favour of a tolerable civilisation inclines sharply towards England. The vivid realisation of this unpleasant truth does not, however, help matters a particle. However much intelligent people in both countries may understand their own nation's defects and however much the late war may have created a bond of sympathy between snobbish Americans—like the author of this book, and upper-class Englishmen—the common people of England and of the United States remain densely ignorant of each other. The contacts of the late war did nothing to improve their comprehension; Mr. Wister himself must be acutely aware of this, otherwise he would not have written this hysterical and rather silly book. In a word, the great majority of the populations of both countries still remains exploitable material for war, and the fondness of Mr. Wister for English manners and the admiration of the *New York Times* for the mentality of Lord Curzon will have no more ultimate effect on the course of events than the amenities exchanged between the Kaiser and the late King Edward during their friendly visits before the war had on Anglo-German relations.

England to-day is an expanded imperialism, and in the nature of things we have become a rapidly expanding one. Unless imperialism is killed at its source in both countries, a conflict of interests must inevitably develop, and our common language and common traditions, upon which Mr. Wister lays so much sentimental emphasis, will only serve to give

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

that conflict fratricidal fury. Confronted with this situation, the author's counsel is worse than negative. It is well enough to ask us to bury the hatchet, but supposing the hatchet refuses to stay buried? It is well enough to ask us to condone England's actions toward Ireland and to sing the praises of Ulster, but supposing civil war develops within the British Empire over the Irish question? It may be granted that we are perfectly willing on both sides to let the past bury its dead, but events are developing inexorably in spite of all this fine display of goodwill, and we in this country will sooner or later be forced, whether we like it or not, to adopt a definite policy towards them. We can not neglect the facts of British imperialism any more than we can neglect the facts of our own. It is not that Mr. Wister neglects these facts, it is merely that he has nothing to suggest—or rather that he has only one thing to suggest, and that suggestion is pitifully childish. He implies that perpetual fear and perpetual hatred of Germany should forever bind the people of the United States to the people of the British Empire, and that whatever differences might develop between us should be composed in the face of the common enemy.

To put it bluntly, Mr. Wister has far to go before he recovers from the panic psychology of the war, and British Tories could ask for no better propagandist than this honest and simple soul who seems still to regard the threat of the spread of German *Kultur* as the supreme menace to the civilised world. For the myth of the rampant German

## A DILAPIDATED SCARECROW

devil is well understood by English imperialists, even if it is not by Mr. Wister, as a first-class dust-raiser to hide unpleasant things going on in India, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ireland, and other sections of the globe where the beneficent authority of the British Colonial Office holds sway. Mr. Wister is the victim of economic innocence and of a sincere admiration, which does him credit, for English civilisation. But the world of modern imperialism, modern labour, modern industrial exploitation seems to exist for him scarcely more realistically than for the youngster at Eton thinking only of boating and cricket. His book is a painful confirmation of the growing suspicion that in the interests of international peace the instinctively academic literary mind should be forbidden to express itself on political matters on pain of the immediate destruction of all it has ever written.

## BIGOTRY *and* CLASS- CONSCIOUSNESS

BEFORE any age can establish a fire-and-burglar-proof claim to enlightenment, it ought first to be sure whether it has really done away with obscurantism or merely altered its mode. A good place to begin inquiry is with the tacit modern assumption that bigotry belongs to the dark ages. Because religious toleration seems to have been finally won for mankind, because a purely religious war to-day would be an anachronism, it is generally assumed that whatever our defects may be, bigotry is not among them. We may be guilty of occasional puritanical excesses, but everybody recognises and laughs at them. There may be a few fanatics, a few cranks, a few bigots, even, amongst us, yes; but bigotry as a significant force within society—this is not of the world of 1921.

It is a dangerous assumption. The deep irrational impulses in men making for bigotry have merely shifted their mode of attack. The bigot is to be found among the reactionaries, on the one hand, and among the violent revolutionists, on the other. Between them, in bitter fact, the world of our time is being led to as deadly and wasteful a conflict of the classes as was ever produced by rival religious sects in the Middle Ages; and from what we have already observed of the clashes of the Whites and the Reds

## BIGOTRY *and* CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS

in the Europe of the past three years the conclusion is irresistible that this modern warfare is every bit as atrocious and as dehumanising as any of the struggles of the 14th or 15th centuries. In so far as religious bigotry has been abandoned, we appear only to have transferred its force to what, for want of a better name, we may call economic bigotry; and it is an open question whether the latter is not more inimical to the peace and well-being of society as a whole.

Happily we can now see, from our good vantage point in history the manner in which religious bigotry arose and the manner of its waning. The analogy between its rise and the rise of modern class-warfare is very striking; the suggestion comes spontaneously that the manner of its disappearance may contain some hints for our own increasingly class-torn society.

Religious bigotry arose because men denied that they had common ideals. Not to believe in a given essential doctrine was not merely to be eccentric in one's theology, it was to put oneself outside the pale of human existence. If one did not express an ideal in the established mode and manner of a sect, your community of interest in the ideal itself was ignored or denied. This is the characteristic of bigotry. The simple, obvious idea which began the era of religious toleration was only that we were worshipping the same God, some under one name and form, some under another; but all aspiring to essentially very much the same thing. Men suddenly realised that religiously George Gordon, in the preface to one of those strange volumes of confessions that show how



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

anxious the American writer is to explain himself, remarks:

We flatter ourselves that our lives are interesting . . . but they are not. Not even to us, if I am to believe those who make our novels. I appealed to some thirty to tell me of their doings, their ways of work and play; and the answers with few exceptions came in diverse individual words: There is nothing to tell. Now if a man can make nothing out of himself . . . but we are here to make something of ourselves, for the joy of nations and the good of humanity.

It would not have proved anything if, having said that they could make nothing of themselves, the men who make our novels had entered into no further details: one might then have been able to imagine that they were perhaps hiding a light under their bushels. But, alas, they have innocently revealed their heights and depths, and Mr. Gordon is justified in his comment: they and their lives are dull, dull, dull. It is because they are the victims of ignorance, chiefly. They have never sufficiently lived *into* the creative life to know its satisfactions, the satisfaction of registering one's individuality in the midst of the herd, of making one's life *tell*. Otherwise they could never have been bribed by the herd's rewards.

The darkness that enfolds them—for that is the heart of the matter—is, indeed, Cimmerian. Mrs. Atherton, that operatic soul who, from time to time, darts across the American horizon, like a comet running amuck, really seems to believe that she is a great genius: how can she help it when no one has ever effectively told her that she is not one? And think of Mr. Rupert Hughes! Mr. Hughes recently

## BIGOTRY *and* CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS

began an autobiographical sketch with a vindication of Henry Fielding, assuring us that those who read Fielding in his own day "took him as a mere entertainer." Mr. Hughes, as I remember, did not say in so many words that he was another Fielding, but he certainly implied it. And why should he not be convinced of it, when the newspapers are always telling him how patriotic he is? Our criticism has much to answer for: indeed, of all the facts of our life that are responsible for the limbo of the magazines, our criticism is the most responsible. May one mention two or three instances in point? The author of "Literature in the Making," a collection of reprinted interviews with various popular American writers which had some vogue two or three years ago, observed, referring to his heroes, in the preface:

They knew that through me they spoke . . . to all the literary apprentices of the country, who look eagerly for precept and example to those who have won fame by the delightful labour of writing. They knew that through me they spoke . . . to the critics and students of literature of our own generation and, perhaps, of those that shall come after us. How eagerly would we read, for instance, an interview with Francis Bacon on the question of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, or an interview with Oliver Goldsmith in which he gave his real opinion of Dr. Johnson, Garrick and Boswell! A century or so from now, some of the writers who in this book talk to the world may be the objects of curiosity as great.

Why should Mr. Rupert Hughes distinguish between himself and Fielding when American criticism does not do so? How, when this is the normal mode of our criticism, can American writers ever discover

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

what the literary life truly is? And this is the normal mode of American criticism. Glance, for another example, at Mr. Grant Overton's preface to "The Women Who Make Our Novels":

An effort has been made to include in this book all the living American women novelists whose writing, by the customary standards, is artistically fine. An equal effort has been made to include all the living American women novelists whose writing has attained a wide popularity. The author does not contend, nor will he so much as allow, that the production of writing artistically fine is a greater achievement than the satisfaction of many thousands of readers.

Which is the greater achievement, a paper balloon or a dish of stuffed peppers? Why is a mouse when it spins? And what is the ethic of a criticism that at once confirms the barbarous taste of the public and convinces the author that he has nothing to learn about himself? Mr. Overton had two birds in his bush, and he has killed them both with one stone. And criticism is supposed to be the art of bringing life!

Limbo, the place of lost souls; the world of the magazines, of this accepted American literature of ours, is nothing else or less. And our criticism will continue to merit contempt until it develops in itself powers of redemption.

## SCIENCE *and* COMMON SENSE

THE two do not necessarily go together; indeed, it is often the scientist and no one else who would profit most from the possession of that assessing and discriminating quality which, since antiquity, has been described by the term good, or common, sense. Even if we admit that the late war was hardly worth the price, we can still turn to excellent account some of its salutary by-products, and one of the most salutary was the illuminating discovery that scientists, intellectuals, professors, the men of light and leading, were fully competent to make just as big fools of themselves as the less learned fry; in fact, bigger. To not a few competent observers this discovery has been extremely painful, and some of them have gone so far as to suggest that the world would be better off and the ordinary man considerably happier, if modern education were thrown overboard, bag and baggage. Theoretically, we must confess, this proposition has considerable attractiveness; but as there is small chance of its being put into effect, any discussion of its advantages has approximately as much value as a nominating speech at a political convention. Whether we like them or not, we have got to put up with modern science and modern education, and we might as well make the best of them. Our chief concern, if we care a penny about any genuine

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

humanism, is to see to it that we are not frightened or intimidated by them.

For the truth is we have got to do much more than merely put up with them. Every age seems to have its peculiar measure of superstitions and follies, and our own age, which we may make roughly coincident with the rise of machine-technology, has made science a fetish. It is probably true that the Middle Ages were priest-ridden, but that fact gives us no warrant for looking down upon them with pity. We are a little worse off, if anything, for where religious bigotry has collapsed we have replaced it with bigotry of a different kind. We are science-ridden; and it requires no great powers of perception to see that science rampant—rampant medicine in particular—is every bit as tyrannical, and is considerably more absurd than the arrogant religions of the past. As the ordinary man of all times and ages appears to have a congenital itch for something or somebody he can bow down to and reverence, and as the ordinary man of this industrial era of the machine-shop and the motor-tractor appears to have found it increasingly difficult to bow down to and reverence the tribal god of a pastoral people (Thorstein Veblen has adroitly exposed this state of affairs), he has selected science for his ultimate source of authority. From the point of view of efficiency, increased production, and material wealth this conversion has considerable to be said in its favour, but from the point of view of the humanist, it is profoundly disquieting; precisely because it is more humiliating to see the human soul shiver before blue prints, laboratories, and tech-



## SCIENCE *and* COMMON SENSE

nical experts than to see it shiver before a God of Vengeance and a future Hell. Unfortunately the war did not cure the ordinary man of this habit. The spectacle of the scientist judging ultimate and larger questions of public policy with every bit as much recklessness and stupidity as he himself, has failed to impress him.

But to the humanist who wishes to resist the contemporary irrational mob-fear before the fetish of science, the spectacle does suggest certain corrective reflections. These reflections spring really from a proper understanding and definition of intelligence. Perhaps the saddest of popular fallacies is that which, for want of a better name, one may call the compensatory fallacy, the naïve belief that a man may be genuinely excellent in one thing and horribly stupid in everything else, the specialist *par excellence*, and yet, on the whole, decidedly merit being called an intelligent man. This is an age of specialisms, too often unrelated specialisms, and there is even something disreputable, like jack-of-all-trades, in the very phrase, "the all-round man," although as a matter of fact the most valid definition of the all-round man would be the intelligent man. For the hardest point to make clear to the popular mind is that above a certain minimum point specialisation *per se* is no criterion of intelligence whatsoever; that a man may be a first-rate specialist in a particular field and yet be fundamentally an ignoramus.

The ordinary citizen seems to see this point clearly enough when it is exemplified in such a case as that of the eight-year-old Polish boy who defeats twenty

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

French chess experts simultaneously, yet who longs to ride on the blue pigs at the fair at Neuilly. But when it comes to the professor, or the instructor with a degree, the application of the parallel never takes place. Yet the bald fact is that our universities shelter many well-crammed, narrowly disciplined, expert specialists who by any proper intelligence-rating come perilously near becoming morons. They do incalculable harm to the impressionable youths who are taught by them, and of course they never really advance their own particular field by original work. One of the most important problems facing modern university-administration is the problem of preventing these essentially unintelligent men from getting technical training.

The waste of intelligence in the modern world, the misapplication and misuse of it, the fostering of unintelligent passivity, is really appalling. The ratio of the highly intelligent to the less intelligent and merely stupid, is roughly one to ten; the real problem of modern education is to discover ways and means to make that ten per cent get the technical training. For then, being intelligent men and not mere specialists, they will be in a position to see their own specialty in its proper perspective, to realise that its methodology may be wholly inapplicable to another set of facts, to relate it in a humanistic way to the rest of the body of knowledge. All first-rate original, creative, or valuable intellectual work is done in this fashion and no other.

What one has to come back to again and again is the simple proposition that a high degree of intelli-

## SCIENCE *and* COMMON SENSE

gence means a high power of correlation. But even this statement is open to misunderstanding. A high degree of intelligence is not merely the ability to correlate everything in terms of one methodology; the attempt to strait-jacket all the facts of this world and the next in terms of one method is not intelligence at all, it is merely ingenuity. It is, of course, the favourite game of modern philosophers, but a more fundamentally ignorant body of men than modern philosophers it would be hard to find in a year's travel. To correlate means strictly that; to put in intelligible terms the relations between several sets of facts, to assess a number of different methodologies in terms of common sense and wide judgment. It is no accident that during the war in England—and the phenomenon was to a certain extent paralleled in other countries—the physicists and chemists were on the whole intolerant and harsh in their attitude toward Germany and the war in general, whereas the biologists, the botanists, and anthropologists, again on the whole, were tolerant and enlightened. This might have been expected almost *a priori*. The set of facts with which chemists and physicists customarily deal, requires a much less flexible and much more unimaginative methodology than the set of facts coming within the range of those studying living organisms and human beings. Again in modern psychology, without attempting to raise any thorny epistemological problems, it is fairly obvious to common sense that the scientist is dealing with two essentially different sets of facts: on the one side, the physiological and chemical reactions of the

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

human body; on the other, the life of consciousness to which these reactions are so intimately related. Yet much unadulterated balderdash and sophisticated humbug is written on psychology, just because of the frantic attempts to cram both sets of facts within the framework of one methodology. Unending are the disquisitions on consciousness being just one aspect of "response" seen from a different angle, and so on. The desire for a monistic view in a jangled, pluralistic world must be very deep in all of us; for it can drive even intelligent men to the topmost heights of absurdity. A good deal of modern psychological writing is pathetic proof of how deep that desire is.

The proposition that the real criterion of intelligence is in the degree of power of correlation is hardly a new one; but it needs to be restated with considerable emphasis just now when science was never subdivided into so many specialisms and when we have allowed the perfectly healthy concept of the all-round man to acquire a mysterious stigma. Other ages were more sane. Aristotle, Leonardo da Vinci, and Shakespeare were probably regarded by their contemporaries as fairly level-headed, all-round men; yet that fact can hardly be said to have tarnished their intellectual reputation. To-day we mock at the all-round man simply because it is so devilishly difficult to be one. The temptations to fly off into erratic specialisation are too multifarious and too compelling. Yet in his heart no one knows better than the scientist himself that no really creative work will be done by him even in his own field until he can rise above his specialty and survey it objectively;

## SCIENCE *and* COMMON SENSE

until, in a word, he can apply common sense to his technical problem when the technical resources are exhausted.

The humanist has a perfectly valid case for his assertion of the supremacy of the all-round point of view; and never ought he to press it more boldly than to-day. He ought not to be timid about asserting that if a man has learned really to think straight on one subject, the chances are ten to one that he will think straight on most others, for the essence of thinking straight is always the same. Now, more than ever before, we ought to be especially wary of the specialist who makes an egregious ass of himself nearly every time he expresses any opinion on any subject other than his own. It is an odds bet that if we examined such a person more carefully, we should find that in his specialty he was doing his work solely by rote and formula; rote that he has unintelligently assimilated and formula that he does not fully comprehend.



## ROOTS *of* ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

Now that our participation in the amalgamated society of imperial freebooters—otherwise known as the League of Nations—seems to have been adjourned *sine die*, the present is a salutary time for reflection upon certain of the causes of anti-British feeling in America, for it is this feeling as much as anything else, which is responsible for the present odd state of affairs.

A great deal of nonsense has been talked on both sides of the debate. Some people afflicted with an over-romantic imagination see the white race committing suicide through an Anglo-American war, simply because so many of our doughboys, after billeting in merry England, came home breathing rage and defiance at all "lime-juicers." Yet even these romanticists are considerably nearer to reality than are the timid liberals, who, during the war, prated about our liberties and independence being protected by the British Fleet, and whose chief emotion, when anything like a "break" with England was suggested (whether to enforce our neutrality, to prevent our mails from being tampered with, or what not), resembled that of a child afraid to go home in the dark.

In general, no spectacle is more amusing than the way in which one nation's estimate of another is

## ROOTS of ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

formed by the Artful Dodgers of publicity, but in particular, no spectacle is more pathetic than the fashion in which we and the British learn about each other. It must be painfully confusing to the clerk of Upper Tooting to hear alternate voices from America, one telling him that he is the Lord of Creation, and the other that he is the Scum of the Earth. It is almost equally confusing to the good citizen of Terre Haute, Indiana, to receive the compliments graciously enunciated by His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, and at the same time to learn of the cheerful yet libelous lucubrations of Mr. Horatio Bottomley, M.P.

Now the truth is, neither group of self-appointed leaders of public opinion represents the prosaic facts. Both the 'phobes and the 'philes merely add to the general confusion and misunderstanding, and indeed—as is usually the habit of all extreme propagandists either pro or anti—play into each other's hands in doing so. To those who can rise above the astigmatism of editorial opinion it ought to be fairly obvious that the anti-British feeling in America is traditional and runs deep. On the other hand, no one can be long in England without becoming aware of the islander's almost instinctive feeling of superiority to those from "the States," and as for Canada the anti-American attitude of most Canadians is proverbial.

Many of the causes of this ill-will (on both sides) are legitimate, and many are not. I have no desire to pose as a moral censor, and point out which is which—rather I shall attempt here only to put down

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

the facts, with as little personal bias as possible. One does this the more readily inasmuch as a true alliance between the United States and Great Britain, or a union with her in a fellowship of all peoples, is the goal of all those who honestly desire international concord. But such an alliance or such a fellowship can never be more than a farce if it be fostered merely by excessive adulation; on the other hand, excessive vituperation can not ultimately prevent it, when common interest and common respect for the same international purposes make it possible. Indeed a real friendship between the two countries can come to reality only after many of us—on both sides of the water—have ruthlessly done what we can to cut some sort of path through the jungle of misconceptions in which we now seem to be lost.

During the war official propagandists did their level best to turn that jungle into a swamp. One would think, after reading some of the "revised" school histories, that the Declaration of Independence was only a temporary aberration, and that the Red-coats at Bunker Hill were merely Prussian mercenaries ingeniously placed there to foster bad feeling between ourselves and the "Mother Country." Yet for all this no "gob" walked into the American Bar at Liverpool without the chip of 1776 on his shoulder, nor, after a drink or so, did he fail to make clear that what we had done then we could, against all comers, easily repeat. Not even the war-time flood of British propaganda could wash out that century-old attitude. The generation that went to the war had not forgotten that we became a nation

## ROOTS of ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

by successful revolution against the tyranny of British rule.

When Americans talk about Ireland or Egypt or India remaining "within the frame-work of the British Empire"—and assume that theirs is the proper American attitude—they are like people denying their own parentage. They are not Americans at all; they are belated Colonials. For if the United States of America means anything, it means the assertion of national independence; we can understand the term "Self-governing Dominions" (the adjective gives us the clue), but we can understand better the desire for complete political freedom, especially in a case where English rule is involved. It is really a pity that Mr. William Randolph Hearst has such a bad name (not that he doesn't deserve it, of course); for his bitter anti-English editorials have really much more national good political sense in them than have all the apologies of liberal journals of opinion. It is this national sense of his which partly explains why Mr. Hearst in general is such a good political prophet, and the lack of it why the "intellectuals" are usually such bad ones. All this may be very unpleasant reading, but I see no use trying to blink the facts, however disagreeable they may be. The traditional isolation of the United States, to which we are now reverting after our late rather disastrous experiment in search of the international Holy Grail, is a reflection of some of our early idealism as much as it is the product of mere selfishness and national indifference. It is not merely that we decline to meddle



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

in the affairs of other nations; there are also certain schemes to which we refuse to be a party—and the British scheme of Crown Colony exploitation is one of them.

The case of Ireland dramatises the whole situation for Americans. It may seem grotesque that a legislative body could one day pass a law making it a crime even to think of any new form of government, and on the very next day officially welcome Mr. De Valera, who most assuredly is thinking of little else; such a sequel of events would be grotesque, except in Albany, New York, U. S. A. Those cynics are wide of the mark who point sneeringly to the large Irish vote, which has to be placated now and again. Naturally the politicians keep a weather eye on the Irish vote, but the important thing which the cynics seem not to take into account is that there *is* that Irish vote to keep a weather eye upon. Even during the war public opinion was tolerant of those who platformed against English rule of Ireland and even allowed a draftee to register with his draft board as born in "the free Irish Republic." To-day, in these piping times of bolshevist hysteria, it is safe to say that Jim Larkin would never have been given free residence in Sing Sing, if he had contented himself with preaching political independence for Ireland instead of rocking the international boat with peculiar ideas of the economic rights of the working classes.

The plain fact is that American sympathy for Irish independence is traditional and quite natural; and our politicians, legislators, and judges are terribly afraid of it. English liberals, of course, are quite



## ROOTS of ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

aware of all this, and see in the abandonment of coercion in Ireland a good instrument for bringing about better Anglo-American relations. English trade union leaders too might do well to consider the American attitude seriously; our own trade union leaders include many Irish-Americans who would be far more ready to believe in the internationalism of British labour if it would bring itself to endorse realistically Irish nationalistic claims. Meanwhile Englishmen must reconcile as best they can the paradox of a nation eagerly buying bonds of the yet mythical Irish Republic while permitting the loan of money, raised by its own Liberty Bonds, to be used to pay the heavy expenses of quartering a British army in Ireland.

Again, British relations with the Far East, with China particularly, have hardly been of the kind to increase our admiration of British imperial achievements. For reasons difficult to analyse, the American attitude towards China is an example of one of our best international traditions, just as England's Chinese record has been perhaps one of her worst. I say difficult to analyse because beneath the acts of ostensible friendship on the part of this country towards China there has been a curious yet genuine affection. We can generally "get along" pretty well with the "Chink," and has not every American city of any size its Chinese restaurant where "chop suey" is the basic dish? (It's of no consequence that the Chinese know nothing of that dish at home; it has become a symbol to us.) Our national record in China has been relatively decent,

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

excepting of course the lamentable exploits of the present Administration, the Lansing-Ishii episode in particular; we are the founders of the "Open Door" policy, and of all Western nations the Chinese trusted us the most. It is perhaps worth the English liberal's attention that the popular mind in this country is not altogether ignorant of his country's record in the matter of the opium trade; that British efforts to tie up China commercially and financially make no popular appeal to us; and furthermore, that tales of barbarity and oppression in India sooner or later reach the ears of shocked American audiences; that the war-time alliance between this country and Japan has been fundamentally an unnatural one, and that English interests can hardly expect it to remain permanent.

Of course, an Englishman can legitimately defend himself against all this with a *tu quoque*, referring to our own imperialistic adventures in Latin-America and elsewhere, and from the point of view of abstract principle there is really not a fig to choose between us. We are brothers under the skin. But unfortunately Anglo-American relations are not helped by thus having the pot call the kettle black; and after all, our own imperialism is a comparatively recent growth, it is not spectacular, it has not become part of our national tradition. In the process of cleansing our respective national records of their stains England, for purely historical reasons, will have to begin the contest in generosity. And through causes largely not of our own making, America's record so far has actually far fewer stains upon it.

## ROOTS of ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

For example, one of the neglected roots of anti-British feeling in this country is to be found in England's attitude towards Turkey. Historically England has had to play, just as she is playing to-day, the rôle of physician to the ever-convalescent Sick Man of Europe. The control of Constantinople is regarded as vital to the safety of the British Empire, and no sentimental humanitarianism about Turkish atrocities can mitigate that stern fact—nor, it may be added, can the most vehement protests of English liberals move their Foreign Office to change its policy on this point. But the United States has no "vital interest" in Constantinople or in the break-up of the Turkish Empire. On the contrary, most Americans naïvely believe it would be a "good thing" if the Turk were kicked out of Europe bag and baggage, and, indeed, nobody in this country except perhaps the cigarette-makers, who would be somewhat at a loss for attractive advertising pictures, would care if he were kicked off the face of the earth. Foreigners ought to know that the culture and moral tone of America is set by the prosperous Middle West in happy conjunction with the Methodist Episcopal Church—whose recent resolution by the way, against recognition of the Irish Republic should be taken with a grain of anti-Catholic salt—and up and down this fair land the Turkish infidel is regularly stormed against from rural pulpits. That England should be the staunchest protector of this unfortunate heathen is disquieting to many Puritan American consciences. At bottom, America is a narrow-minded, bigoted, Protestant Christian country, and

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

we have no use at all for those nations which do not believe with us that the world ought to be made over in our own image. Englishmen, in particular, seem blissfully unaware of this condition. Let them take fair warning; if it ever does come to a war between us, here in this mentality of ours will be one of the explanations of the fanatical fervour with which it will be waged.

Naturally, in saying this I do not mean to speak in any alarmist sense. The fact is of course that we can go far in our quarrels with England before it need ever come to blows. But a danger lurks in the very elasticity of our attitude; and the danger is that it can be abused. A large part of the latent anti-British feeling in America to-day is a direct consequence of what are felt to be the humiliations of the late war—we feel that we didn't get much out of the affair except high prices, bad debts, and prohibition. It irritates us to think of the Englishman taking his own personal liberty so much for granted; if we are going to be miserable, we want him to be miserable too. And many estimable Americans are distinctly annoyed at the spectacle of England getting away with everything that's not tied down. As M. Fribourg indelicately observed in a recent issue of *Le Petit Parisien*, England got the lion's share of the spoils of the peace treaty: "An empire with close to 19,000,000 square miles, peopled with 422,000,000 of inhabitants, I imagine is worth our attention." How can those great captains of the American oil industry have felt when they read in the same newspaper of England's acquiring all the Per-



## ROOTS of ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

sian concessions and that the United States had been graciously offered the lemon of a mandate over Armenia. Our shipping and commercial men too have none too pleasant recollections of the manner in which our benevolent neutrality, before 1917, was abused to the point of our mails being opened and our business dealings scrutinised. And there are a good few of us who do not relish the sight of English secret service agents being used as witnesses in trials of American citizens—the whole sorry business was rather overdone during the war, and it shows neither good judgment nor good taste for the same activities to be continued now. In short, Englishmen should be aware that even a free horse can be ridden to death. Not every Administration will be as subservient to British interests as the soon-to-be-deceased Administration has been during the last eight long years.

Besides these more or less minor irritations, the real basis of anti-British feeling in America, is, as it always has been, the Englishman himself. In "Why Men Fight" Bertrand Russell speaks of the hot hatred of the Germans "on account of our pride." He goes on,

. . . the Germans are maddened by our spiritual immobility. At bottom we have regarded the Germans as one regards flies on a hot day: they are a nuisance, one has to brush them off, but it would not occur to one to be turned aside by them.

Now this Englishman's feeling that other nations really don't count is, of course, far less strong in its manifestation towards us than towards any other



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

foreigner. But it is replaced by an unconscious snobbery, which is perhaps worse; it is at any rate more exasperating. No one who has ever travelled on a British steamship going, let us say, to Cape Town, can have failed to observe the subtle line of social demarcation between the Englishman and the Colonial. It crops out in the most unexpected ways, but it is always there, and the Colonial is made to feel very definitely that he is an inferior. The Englishman assumes his superiority as naturally as he assumes the fact of the British Empire. Similarly, in his attitude towards Americans, the average Englishman assumes, probably unconsciously, that we are still Colonials, rather capricious Colonials to be sure, and with peculiar, amusing ways of our own, but still Colonials. America has hardly become a definite national entity in his consciousness; we do not, quite literally, exist as a rival nation or as an important factor in his world. We both speak the same language; we have the same traditions of law and civilisation; we are of one colour and blood; we are all Anglo-Saxons—and is it not an Anglo-Saxon world? The Englishman regards an alliance with us, at all events common action with us, as perfectly natural, if not indeed, inevitable—with England doing the directing. I shall not stress this point because Americans understand it only too well; it would make us angry, if it did not make us laugh. After all, Englishmen are hardly to be blamed for not seeing the point. Our own snobs with money have flattered them to the top of their bent. Yet nationally we are of the mood of Mark Twain when he wrote “A Con-

## ROOTS of ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

necticut Yankee"; it is still true that we regard ourselves as the salt of the earth. And while I do not seek to pass any judgment on these respective claims to superiority, I may perhaps point out that no genuine Anglo-American *entente cordiale* can come into existence until England has accepted the fact of America, as, after four horrible years, she had to accept the fact of Germany. It is because I for one want that acceptance to come without the bloody intrusion of war, and because so many of my own friends are Englishmen, that I commend to the liberal Englishman's attention these few unpalatable truths.

The present condition of things is altogether unnatural. The British Empire to-day is to a great extent an historical accident. The leadership of the Anglo-Saxon world, if that world is not to be destroyed in futile fratricidal strife, by the nature of sheer hard economic fact belongs henceforth to America and not to England. A war between the two countries would mean the irretrievable defeat of England (there is nothing of jingo pride in this) and her relegation to the comparative importance of a Scandinavian country. England's present control over alien populations is—as the best minds of England have admitted—transitory and introductory to their complete self-government. Her imperialistic exploits are in a state of unstable equilibrium. The British Isles are not economically self-sufficient. They are not financially self-sufficient. Without the open or tacit support of the United States England would to-day be bankrupt. She can not compete with

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

us industrially (for which fact, if she were wise, she would thank Heaven)—she has not the natural resources with which to do so. Her present appearance of great power comes from the possession of privilege—the privilege of exploitation—and privilege in this sense is being irrevocably done away with. In a word, England in the terms of realistic economics must shortly cease to be the tail that wags the Anglo-Saxon dog. No American in his right mind wants his own country to don the toga of the greatest power of the twentieth century (we admit we are the most moral!), yet it would be far more sensible for us to make such pretensions than for England to do so.

I shall of course be accused of inconsistency for saying that we in America have no desire to meddle in other people's affairs, and at the same time admitting that we want to reform the world. But this is only the inconsistency of the facts. Imperialistically, we have little taste and less tradition for meddling in other people's affairs; in that sense we really do believe in self-determination—because we have had such good luck with it ourselves, probably. Idealistically or morally, as you will, it is the sad truth that we should like to see the world made over in the image of Kansas. We want to justify our civilisation, but we have little desire to extend it by force or—as the clever historian said of Britain's way—in a fit of absent-mindedness. We want other peoples to agree with us; we don't particularly want them to become part of us.

Englishmen ought to undergo a transvaluation of

## ROOTS *of* ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

values. What the world needs is not the British Empire but English civilisation. Far from having nothing to learn from England, America, with the rest of the world, has everything to learn from her—justice, a vivid sense of personal and civil rights, the infallible expediency of free speech, political good sense, the whole art of compromise, sportsmanship, and good taste. America can take care well enough of the materialistic task of seeing that the Anglo-Saxon world continues to exist; to England is reserved the more important job of proving that Anglo-Saxon civilisation is worth existing. If I were giving any advice to liberal Englishmen, it would be this: Forget your Empire and remember your poets; the Empire isn't worth a damn!

## PROGRESS *versus* INDUSTRIALISM

WHEN Mayor Hylan of New York indignantly repudiated the recent census-estimate that the Island of Manhattan had actually decreased in population since 1910, he was but giving expression, in its most naïve form, to the popular fallacy about progress which dates back to Darwin. Rationally one might welcome the fact that there are fewer people on this crowded island—such a fortunate development would give those of us who are left a little more space to move around in, which would be particularly grateful in the hot spells. But the Mayor feels that the honour of the city has been somehow impugned; fewer people means retrogression, the hands of the clock are being turned back—in a word, we are not progressing.

The popularisation and spread of the doctrines of evolution have given the common concept of progress an odd twist. To-day progress means specifically the lapse of time. Select any two types of civilisation you wish, and to the ordinary man that type which is chronologically the later is automatically the higher. It must be so; otherwise what meaning would there be in evolution?—and evolution is still a modern idol. The idea has insinuated itself into our liberal terminology, “forward-looking” for example, although here again rationally, if present tendencies continue, the



## PROGRESS *versus* INDUSTRIALISM

person interested in true human progress will be increasingly compelled to look backward. It is difficult nowadays to win acceptance for the older concept of progress as a closer approximation to an ideal of happiness and human projection. Progress, properly, is a qualitative and not a quantitative concept. Mayor Hylan to the contrary notwithstanding, the man who is really interested in progress does not care how many people there may be on the earth. He is interested rather in the kind of people they are, and in the kind of lives they lead. Progress does not connote the piling up of tools and material, but rather the uses to which these things are put. It implies a set of ends, or values, in terms of which institutions and tendencies may be appraised.

From this point of view, the series of phenomena which we loosely group under the word industrialism may be either an aid or a hindrance to true human progress. In point of fact, up to the present time it has been an hindrance. With the ever-accelerating development of modern industrialism, we have reached a point when we must turn sharply around and re-examine all our old assumptions. The recent war, which came very near to destroying the social order so far as Central Europe is concerned, was in the deepest sense a revolt against the repressions and discipline of an iron industrialism. Human nature simply could not stand the inner strain; and it went to pieces; scientifically and methodically, if you like, but none the less actually. So, too, in ancient Sparta the discipline of the citizen for the good of the State reached its perfection almost sim-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

ultaneously with the appearance of those inner rebellions that finally destroyed it. When industrialism, which makes productive efficiency possible, becomes dehumanised, as it is to-day, the human animal rebels with disastrous results, precisely because modern productive efficiency and militancy of the old, male, predatory, buccaneering sort are at bottom incompatible. Modern nationalistic wars—with their inevitable conscription of the entire citizenry and regimentation of the entire resources of the State—are far too high a price to pay for the correction of the evils of a rigid peace-time industrialism. Yet they are the price we shall continue to pay, even if in the end they destroy us utterly, so long as industrialism continues on its present lines of development.

When, somewhere back in biological history, living organisms diverged into two streams of tendency—one developing into that gorgeous instinctive living mechanism, the ant, and the other developing into man—it is fairly safe to say that nature (not even with a capital N) could hardly have anticipated our modern factory-system. Yet the development of the ant has been much more compatible with that system than the development of man. The ant has reached a point where it has no period of infancy whatever; a few seconds after emerging into the air, its structure complete in every way, it sets to work upon its allotted task—an ideal arrangement for factory workers; no bother about childhood or education or natural laziness or even sex, for the ants very sensibly keep their workers neuter. Moreover,

## PROGRESS *versus* INDUSTRIALISM

there are no unemployment-difficulties among these highly developed ants; within the limits of their intricate social structure, each member has his definite task to perform; in fact his body is physiologically built for his task and he sets to work without a moment's hesitation or awkwardness. We can watch in the evolution of the ant, specialisation—from the human point of view—to the *n*th degree, and habit made inflexible not merely through repetition and self-control, but actually carried over into the physiological structure and “set.” It is no paradox that among the ants, of all living creatures, pure parasitism has reached its most perfect development. Not only do certain tribes of ants deliberately go out to capture slaves, or steal the eggs of their neighbours and bring up the next generation as slaves, but in some cases they are so thoroughly developed that they actually can not eat their own food. These delicate creatures have to be fed through the mouth by other ants specially trained for that purpose; and they will die of starvation if left alone even in the midst of plenty. Here, indeed, is epicureanism *in extremis*, and to an imaginative mind there are not lacking certain analogies to modern industrialism and conspicuous waste among humans, upon which it would, perhaps, be painful to dwell.

But man took a different road from the ant, and as we at present know him, of all living creatures, he has the longest relative period of infancy, approximately one-third of his natural life. Our modern habit-philosophers and disciplinarians too often forget the full implications of this simple fact, just

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

as our modern industrialism forgets it completely. It means, of course, an infinitely high degree of flexibility and adaptability, a nervous system which, for all its massive mechanisms, still preserves a wide margin of variation. Man must change his work, his pace, his thoughts, his environment constantly and continuously, if he is to satisfy his deeper needs—"getting into a rut" is everywhere recognised as the cardinal sin against human nature. In the larger number of modern States, even when most highly industrialised, the farmer is still the chief man of the nation, as agriculture is the chief industry. By the very nature of his incessantly changing task, for all its drudgery, the farmer is kept sane, and it is his breed that keeps the cities sane. But now the spirit of industrialism is beginning to invade the farm. Steadily more and more, all mankind is coming under the blighting influence of mechanical routine.

Deeper perhaps than any need for change in the method of education, far deeper than any need for new political structures, is the fundamental need for humanising modern industrialism. Modern technology and machine-processes must be prevented from becoming anything more than instruments, and rather unpleasant instruments at that, for the achievement of great and enriching human ends. The worship of quiet, regular habits of industry must be rejected.

It is not, therefore, a mere accident [writes Graham Wallas] that the Great Society has been developed with most success among those North European races whose



## PROGRESS *versus* INDUSTRIALISM

power of blind habituation excited the contempt of the Greeks. If Aristotle could stand on London Bridge or at Liverpool Street Station on any week-day at 8.45 A.M., he would think that the "Kelts" were more insane than ever.

Precisely; and if Aristotle were to go into a large automobile factory in Detroit and watch a man turn a screw in one direction with mechanical regularity for eight mortal hours a day, he would wonder if he were observing a human being or a kind of ant with a new structure; and probably at the melancholy spectacle of the scientific employment-engineer he would yield himself completely a prey to despair.

It is no mere sentimental regard for fair play for the workers, or any dilettante wish to democratise industry, which makes imperative the break-up of the routines of modern industrialism. This attack does not need to be justified on any altruistic ground; it is quite literally a matter of self-preservation. After all, a man is much more a playing than a working animal; against his inclinations he can be driven only so far. His habits are always more unstable than his inherited dispositions; and to build a civilisation on the former rather than the latter is to build on sand instead of on rock. To procure by drill and regimentation certain habits of regularity and acceptance of industrial routine, is merely transitory and deceptive. Modern industrialism must be made to conform to the true nature of man, and until it has been so made, anything in the shape of true human progress is impossible.



## *The* TWILIGHT *of the* GODS

THE League of Nations may be just a crooked device to get us to guarantee England's conquests, as Mr. Hearst is never tired of telling us it is; it may be a beneficent instrument to restore the broken heart of the world, as Mr. Wilson assured us again only the other day. But most ordinary Americans have given little thought to the matter; a goodly majority of them voted for Mr. Harding last autumn simply because they were sick of the old Administration, and, oddly enough, both those who voted for and those who voted against the League of Nations did so in the belief that they were voting for lessened chances of war. Yet whatever happens, they will not be greatly disillusioned, for their affections and emotions are not touched by this ghostly "issue," let the politicians rave about it as they will.

But it is quite otherwise with the major baseball leagues. A scandal here is something that comes home intimately to almost every American family, and not merely to fathers and mothers alone but to the "kids" of all classes to whom the names of Cicotte, Jackson, Weaver, Felsch, and the others are even better known than to their parents, and certainly more revered. To the adult citizen, and to the adolescent citizens to come, the recent dis-

## *The TWILIGHT of the GODS*

closures of corruption in the baseball world have been the real news of the year, and the saddest. Here is something that has really hurt. Political ideals might go, faith in parliamentary government might go, public integrity and decency might go, constitutional liberty and civil rights might go—must honest sportsmanship now go the way of all the rest? It is saddening to reflect upon the precocious cynicism which will inevitably be inculcated in the younger generation by the “selling-out” of their idols. Only yesterday the writer stood idly watching a city corner-lot game and one little shaver in the outfield dropped what appeared to be an easy “fly” —“Aw, Jimmie, what was put under *your* pillar last night?” scornfully queried his disgusted team-mate on second base. Yes, it is very melancholy indeed; we found ourselves wondering, oh, ever so slightly, if perhaps the little second-baseman hadn’t perhaps some justification. It is a scandal which has shaken the faith of Americans in first and last things.

Now although it may sound cynical, even though it is not so intended, we have ourselves since childhood’s happiest hours thoroughly enjoyed professional baseball games, yet of recent years we have never doubted that the game has had certain questionable features about it. We have often suspected that some of the games were “fixed.” Not, let us hasten to confess, in the sense that individual players had agreed in advance to “throw” games, but that managers of special teams and the heads of the respective leagues had gotten together and arranged schedules, swapped players, and so on, to the end

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

that different cities might capture the pennants and that public interest might be kept at concert pitch. There was money for them in these arrangements and in an age of sheer commercialisation like ours it would be folly not to expect it to take place.

In one sense, of course, this sort of thing is quite legitimate. It does not reflect at all on the integrity of the individual player. It is just part of the normal scheme of things in what we call clean professional baseball. It is something, however, utterly different from the spirit of sportsmanship in college football—there the question of traditions, the sense of common life in the victory or defeat of the team representing one's own college, is part of one's self, and to all except the prig a very real part. We swell with pride when our college wins, and are correspondingly depressed when it loses. Childish, of course, but a genuine thing in American emotional life. With professional baseball—even when absolutely on the level—the centre of interest is wholly different; it is a delight in the technical proficiency of the individuals *per se* and in a particular team as a whole. There is none of that deeper sense of personal identification; we are glad when New York or Brooklyn wins the pennant chiefly because it means an opportunity to see the world's series without bothersome travelling. It never occurs to us to take a civic pride in our home team in the sense in which we take a pride in our college team. The players may come from anywhere; they do not represent our city as such, but only the managerial and financial astuteness of the owner of the club which

## *The TWILIGHT of the GODS*

bears our city's name. The player we grew fond of last year may hold out for a bigger contract for next season, and we shall see him perhaps in a different uniform. It is not like the contests of city against city in ancient Greece, or even like the county cricket matches in England between, say, Surrey and Lancashire where something like real local pride is involved. The sport has become, in a word, purely and solely professional.

And yet it is precisely this fact which goes far to explain why the individual player, whom we had not hitherto suspected of dishonesty, has finally succumbed to the blandishments of the gambler. He has had none of the college foot-ball player's sense of the generations before him; oftentimes he has not been even a resident of the city which he nominally represented; he has been accustomed to regarding playing in one uniform rather than another as solely a question of trade advantage; the newspapers' sporting slang has always referred to him as having been "sold" to this or "bought" by that particular club. Inevitably he has come to regard his professional skill as in the nature of a commodity to be offered in the market at the highest price, rather than as something which might identify him more personally and affectionately with the community of which he is a part. In a word, there has been no appeal to his civic pride. Baseball has become his profession, not his sport. Commercialism has caused him to look upon the game as a huckster would look at it rather than as a sportsman. Over and above this deeper reason is the indubitable fact that most



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

baseball players are, and of necessity have to be, young, that they usually know very little of life outside of the baseball field, that the college graduate among them is the exception rather than the rule, that taken as a class they are usually simple, unsophisticated, and good-natured fellows. With these qualities they are then over-flattered and over-heroised by the newspapers. They are idolised by the public; they are in most cases very popular with the ladies. Added to all their difficulties, in the winter and early spring, when they are neither in practice nor actually playing, they are constantly beset by swarms of suave, sophisticated, unscrupulous gamblers.

Now, the wonder is not that under the circumstances a few individual players have been found to be so foolish and so unsportsmanlike as to "sell out" their team-mates and the public, but that the great majority, in spite of temptations, have remained absolutely honest. It is really a tremendous tribute to the vitality of American baseball and to the individual competitive qualities which it seems to arouse in the players that these unpleasant scandals, like the present one, have been so few and far between. From the practical point of view, it is a good thing that the present disclosures have been given wide publicity and that the heavy penalties inflicted upon the foolish players in question should have been burned into the consciousness of every other professional player. If the present scandal results in a more public and disinterested control of the two major leagues, every one will probably be the gainer.

The proposal to make gambling on baseball games



## *The TWILIGHT of the GODS*

either a penal offence or a misdemeanour is, of course, mere nonsense and futility. Gambling on the game should be public and allowed; but the heaviest and most immediate penalties (the severest of which would be permanent expulsion from the game) should attach to the player who bets a single dollar. Nevertheless, something like the present scandal is bound to occur periodically unless the deeper faults of professional baseball can be eradicated. To eliminate for ever all dishonesty from the game it must become—to the individual player—something deeper and more important than a mere exhibition of technical skill. It must have some more genuine and vital relation to his social life as a citizen.

## *The* COUNTRY *versus* *the* TOWN

WITH praiseworthy enterprise the New York *World* sent a staff reporter to various cities throughout the Middle West—Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Chicago—to interview the “plain people” on the recent election. The small salaried men, clerks, labourers, porters, machinists, and the like, all those to whom the high cost of living is something more than a campaign slogan, are the people the reporter selects for his interviews; and the results are far more illuminating than the conventional straw-vote. In the latter we usually can only guess at the deciding motive of the choice; we deal only with results. But by this method of tabloid interview we do get some hint of what the people are thinking. For example, a bare registration of a Chicago hotel clerk’s straw-vote for Cox, conceals the human complex of feeling contained in this little declaration: “I heard young Roosevelt here last night and he is a most convincing talker. After what he said, I think the League of Nations would be a good thing. Anyway, Cox is for booze.” (Oh, gullible man!) Or could we guess from a mere vote what this Michigan Avenue *modiste* was thinking? “I saw the Republicans when they were out here nominating Harding. They were a bunch of rowdies and cheap skates. If I had a vote it would

## *The COUNTRY versus the TOWN*

go for the Democrats." She had been in Chicago, but had not been in San Francisco.

Several notable points stand out in these interviews. First, few take the League of Nations seriously, except the Irish who invariably are against it because they think it means the throttling of Irish independence and always warn Cox, if he wants to keep the Irish vote in the party, to "lay off the League of Nations stuff." Second, everybody is intensely interested in how the high cost of living can be reduced, but at the same time everybody is rather sceptical of either party doing anything effective. Third (perhaps as a result of this), there is an equal contempt for both old parties as reactionary; and there are frequent predictions that 1924 will see a real progressive third party in the field. Fourth, there is no sentiment either for or against Debs or the Socialists; either the ordinary man will make a choice of what he seems to regard in this campaign as necessary evils, or he will not vote at all. Fifth, without exception every voter would like a chance to vote on a clean-cut issue of wet or dry, and most of the labourers are frankly for beers and wines, often, indeed, frankly for booze. Everybody, including those few in favour of prohibition, are angry at both parties dodging the issue, although there seems to be a general feeling that Mr. Cox is wetter than Mr. Harding.

On this last point, the interviews are probably not representative of public opinion. The people interviewed are mostly from the town or city; seldom from the rural districts, where the majority of men,

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

and the women almost to a woman, are for prohibition. On this particular question, in fact, a national referendum would have special significance; because the chances are that it would reveal a definite conflict between the town and the country on this point, between industry and agriculture. It would reveal the agrarian population's deep distrust of the urban standard of morals and of "having a good time," its dislike and jealousy. The cities, and the city workers in them, are godless and irreligious from the country's point of view; from that of the city, the country in turn is hypocritical and narrow. Complaint after complaint is registered in these interviews in the *World* by the city worker at the "preachers and the women" who seem to be in a conspiracy to take the joy out of life.

Something of this same conflict of ideals and morals between the town and country, but here sharply intensified by the economic dominance of the country over an industrially broken-down Europe, is given prominence in Mr. H. N. Brailsford's excellent article, "Rural Europe Comes to Power." "In Austria,"<sup>1</sup> he writes, "the clerical and conservative peasants regard socialistic Vienna (mild as its socialism is) as a Babylon of iniquity, and there are even signs of it in the feeling of the rural districts towards Berlin." Mr. Brailsford depicts a very depressing spectacle. His picture is of an illiterate, backward peasantry, no longer compelled to pay tribute to the towns in taxes or mortgages (except in a depreciated currency of which they already have

<sup>1</sup> *New Republic*, 18 August, 1920.

## *The COUNTRY versus the TOWN*

more than they want), starving the bigger towns, living more and more self-contained and self-supporting lives, led by the clericals as our own rural Middle West is to-day too largely led by the broken-down evangelical cretinism so well exhibited in Mr. Howell's last novel; foreign trade sunk to negligible proportions, the whole of Central Europe divided into green plains, each "governed by its own junker peasants and clergy," which "will feed itself and produce a surplus barely sufficient for the millions of hungry miners and weavers."

This picture of a yokel ochlocracy—such as, in matters of taste and morals, we are already getting hints of in our own country—bodes an unpleasant generation for the civilised man. But we feel that Mr. Brailsford has let his pessimism run away with him. The country when all is said and done needs the town too much to let it perish wholly; some sort of compromise will be struck; modern industrialism has penetrated too deeply to be as easily disposed of as this article implies. And even in the question of morals, what would the country do if it had not these "sinks of iniquity" to rail against? It must preserve a certain measure of vice in cities, if only to keep its evangelical fervour at a sufficient tension.

Ultimately, moreover, this chastening of the town by the country will hardly be wholly evil. It will tend towards decentralisation of power; towards variation in habits and customs. It will clean out the city of many of its useless non-producers. It will bring a sharper sense of realities to an over-



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

sophisticated generation of urban workers. And in the final analysis, the farmer or the peasant is not conservative at all, as we city-folk understand conservatism. He is not really socially-minded. He is individualistic to the point of anarchism, and regards to-day—as he has for generations—government as a mere impertinence and interference. Let the cities get rid of their meddlesome political governments that are always dragging him away from his crops into some war that he cares nothing about, let them stop taxing him for the support of armies that do him no good and for the support of public officials intent only on fixing new burdens upon him. Let the cities deal directly with him on the basis of a real exchange of goods, and the surplus will be sufficient to keep up the arts and sciences as a going concern.

The country too long has paid tribute to the city. The economic upsets of the war have given it its opportunity for revenge; and to-day in Europe in the matter of food, and in America in the matter of morals, it is too harsh in that revenge. Yet in the long run, if the city will learn the lesson of free economic co-operation, the revenge of to-day will perform its service in ushering in the franker give and take of to-morrow.

## *The* CLAIMS of LOYALTY

AMONG the recruiting posters in England in the early days of the war was one bearing excerpts from the funeral oration of Pericles, excerpts which were supposed to kindle the patriotic enthusiasm of the Manchester clerk equally with that of the Welsh coal-miner. No employment of an historical example could well have been more grotesque. The Athenians excelled in patriotism because it was attached to something they knew and loved, their city. It was no mystical object. As Mr. Zimmern has finely said:

And when his city brought forth not merely fighters and bards, but architects and sculptors, and all the resources of art reinforced the influence of early association and natural beauty, small wonder, as Pericles said, that the Greek citizen needed but to look at his city to fall in love with her. The Athenian had loved the Acropolis rock while it was still rough and unlevelled, when the sun, peeping over Hymettus, found only ruddy crags and rude Pelasgian blocks to illumine. He loved it tenfold now, when its marble temples caught the first gleam of the morning or stood out, in the dignity of perfect line, against a flaming sunset over the mountains of the West.

This was something one could be loyal to—one's city, with its walls, its market-place, its lyceum, its gardens on the hillsides. One saw it every day; one knew its intimate moods, the quality of its mornings and sunsets, the festivals and games that were part

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

of its common civic life. One was an honoured citizen in it, not a mere anonymity with a franchise.

Now that some of the warped judgments of war-time are disappearing, our leaders in "Americanisation" are becoming dimly aware that something is radically wrong, as in England to-day those who once shouted the patriotic shibboleths most loudly and echoed Mr. Lloyd George's cry of "Make England a land fit for heroes to live in" are also dimly aware that this pious slogan and the present-day facts of widespread unemployment do not go properly together. Their intuition is eminently correct. Our own leaders in this movement to make patriotism a vital thing are now realising—even if they will not openly acknowledge it—that the "patriotism" of our youth during the war was, to an amazing extent, artificial and hysterical. It was not based on reason, or on a sense of justice, or on an affection for that vague entity known as the State. For the most part it came from social pressures quite different in their origin; and those few sincere idealists who were tricked into believing that they were enlisting in a war to end war probably feel more embittered than those who went into it with no such illusions. In any event our "Americanisers" are conscious of a vast, if inarticulate, disaffection in the youth of to-day. They are bewildered and a little frightened by it, so they suggest compulsory military training, "education in citizenship and American ideals," teaching of English to immigrants, patriotic pageants and the like. They bristle with expedients for obtaining from others that loyalty which they—usu-

## *The* CLAIMS of LOYALTY

ally for unconscious motives of protection of property or prestige—think they so keenly feel themselves, but which in any case they vaguely realise as lacking in those to whom they would give their uninvited ministrations.

The trouble with all these proposals is not in their absence of good-will, but in their psychological ineptitude. They are typical of that appalling ignorance of normal human nature which seems to be an almost inevitable accompaniment of large-scale industrialism and the machine-era. The Greeks had no problem of patriotism at all; it was as natural for them to be patriotic as it is with us to protect those we love. They knew their city as we know our college halls and campus, indeed, much better, for they lived with it all their life and not merely during four impressionable years. They had neither the problem of nationality nor the problem of the great society to vex and trouble them. In fact, when we look back to the time of Pericles, and reflect on the long course of years since, how recent is the whole concept of nationality! It was unknown to the Greeks; it was hardly felt by the Romans; again it was unknown in the Middle Ages, which resulted in the increasing power of dynasties (entities to which the ordinary man could cling) and, after the Reformation, the division of Europe into strictly Protestant and strictly Catholic communities rather than into nations as we understand them to-day. Then, too, the industrial revolution had not taken place—a comparatively recent phenomenon in the affairs of man—and the problem of a great Empire,

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

such as the British; or of a territorially vast and populous single nation, such as Russia, or the United States in particular, had not arisen. The loyalties of men could attach themselves to clear, observable objects they loved; their patriotism was simple, sensuous, immediate. It did not have to be, as ours perforce must be if it is to exist at all, conceptual and imaginative.

Of course, we can not here pretend to give any answer to this problem of loyalty; we can only hope to make one or two constructive suggestions. First of all, we need an entirely fresh orientation towards the whole problem. We need to go back and rediscover the fundamentals of human nature—and to realise that in conceptual power, retentiveness of memory, affective sensibility, æsthetic insight, and instinctive equipment we of to-day vary hardly a jot or tittle from the men of the golden age of Greek city life. We have only a greater mechanical equipment that places before us an ever-widening and increasingly distracting field of interests; we have ever more claims upon our loyalties, claims that seem to become proportionately tenuous in direct ratio to their numerical advance.

Merely to state the problem in this fashion gives us a clue. To-day, as it has been for ages past, the problem of loyalty is to find those objects which we can love, to break through the miasma of abstractions and concepts and imaginative entities to visible and sensuous objects to which our affections can spontaneously cling. How false and artificial seems, for example in France, the mystical cult of



## The CLAIMS of LOYALTY.

reverence for *la patrie* as contrasted with the age-long pride of a man in his own province, his own dialect, his own way of life in that province, his sense of dignity in the great men it has produced. How thin and bloodless seems the claim to loyalty to the State as compared with the migratory worker's claim to loyalty to the I. W. W. which represents his club, his friends, his daily problems, his hope of human betterment, his living vision of an ultimate ideal. How strong are men's affections to their church, their family, their immediate neighbourhood as compared with some intangible Federal entity at Washington.

All through our modern life of complicated organisations runs this conflict between the immediate and the remote; we are all familiar with the doctor who is indifferent to his duties as a citizen (in the matter of voting at all events) while keenly alive to his duties as a member of a special and honoured profession. Even the reformers, though we may scoff at them, are examples of the same human tendency; are they not loyal first and foremost to their particular reform before they are loyal to the larger claims of general public policy? Do they not feel that if they (and everybody else along with them) will only pay strict attention to their particular reform, all other things will be added unto them? It is the old, old story that human nature can not be stretched too far; it will snap back to some definite thing it can see and fondle and actively share. Professional propagandists and publicity men are unanimous to-day in saying that the only way money

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

can now be raised from the American public is not through a national appeal, as during the war, but through appeal to local sentiment and local pride.

The real problem of the modern great community, if it is not to break down through overweight, is the problem of decentralisation. The present tendency in the United States is towards increased centralisation, in a word, towards bureaucracy. Now bureaucracy appeals to the administrative type of mind—which our best minds unfortunately are—because such a type of mind tends to regard men as pawns in a game; it wants to strip them of administrative responsibility so that the responsibility may be concentrated in a few aristocratic hands. It is historically significant that nearly all great administrators have been by temperament aristocrats. But such concentration of responsibility always makes the common man irresponsible and erratic; and sooner or later he revolts from sheer ennui at having all his problems solved for him, and his way of life laid out in advance. Local autonomy has much more than a political significance; it is a recognition of perhaps a basic trait of human nature—the tendency to be loyal to and to sacrifice for only those objects one can feel and actively share. That is why the creative type of mind is almost always hostile to centralised authority—because it does not regard men as pawns in a game but as partners in a common adventure. It wants not to remove responsibility from men, but to give them more of it. The creative type of mind knows instinctively that men are permanently loyal only to those things they

## *The* CLAIMS of LOYALTY

love, are responsible for, and can participate in. These contentions seem to us fundamental. Using them as a foundation, we can only hope that competent psychologists will concern themselves with the problem, and perhaps give us suggestions of how our multifarious organisations and conflicting claims of loyalty can be arranged once more on a human basis that leaves us in emotional peace and sets free our creative energies.

## *Through ART to* INDIVIDUALISM

GENERALISATIONS concerning nations are especially dangerous, for there are always specific individuals to give them vivid and personal contradiction. Yet they have certain value as guiding-posts, and when just, they usually suggest tolerance for what is unlike ourselves, a tolerance of which we all to-day stand particularly in need. Furthermore, such generalisations nowhere apply with more force than in a discussion of the æsthetic differentiations among nations. Given a definite set of circumstances, the economic reaction of most modern States is easily predictable, and irrespective of language or colour, certain social consequences flow almost irresistibly from certain social causes. But the æsthetic reaction of a nation is usually peculiar to itself; indeed it is precisely in those deeper likes and dislikes which are properly the subject-matter of æsthetics, that nations discover those more fundamental differences among themselves which lead sometimes to cordial admiration and sometimes to war. The old proverb about *de gustibus* ought to be revised, for it represents a wish rather than a fact; economic and other quarrels can always be composed in the end, but differences in taste are final.

Surveying the Western nations—Russia and the

## Through ART to INDIVIDUALISM

East, for the moment, aside—from the viewpoint of their æsthetic interests, one broad fact seems to stand out. That broad fact, and it is a particularly relevant one at a time when Anglo-Saxon civilisation more and more dominates the West, is that the degree of respect for the individual in any nation can invariably be measured by the range and intensity of the æsthetic interests of that nation. A high development of individualism seems to be an inevitable correlative of any high development of the artistic and creative impulse. Find a nation afflicted with uniformity and standardisation, and you will find a nation in which the æsthetic interests are flickering and weak. Friends of freedom, *libertaires* as the French term them, are barking up the wrong tree when they imagine that the task before them is to remove restrictive legislation; for hampering blue laws are a result rather than a cause. They will find their one trustworthy ally in the artist; and their one sure protection from the encroachments of external authority is in the fostering of the æsthetic impulses of the nation.

Consider France, for an example. The French have many faults, but lack of respect for the individual, his mind and his personality, is not one of them. Nowhere in the Western World can the individual think and act in a freer or more liberating atmosphere. To be “different” is not to be excommunicated; it is in fact to be respected for, and judged by, the essential quality of that difference. This cordiality towards individualism extends even to colour, where its connection with the æsthetic in-



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

terest is clear. Like all Latin countries, France has little native colour prejudice, but the French people's interest in and liking for the Negro goes much deeper. They are delighted with him as an æsthetic spectacle—in Loti, Gautier, Pierre Louÿs and innumerable other French authors, are glowing descriptions of different types such as the bronze and the ebony. The same fine French quality of disinterestedness, which always finds its best exemplification in the genuine artist, is carried over to intellectual things. One is not thought eccentric in France if one has a mental individuality of one's own; to have one's peculiar way of looking at, feeling, and appraising things is considered as much one's personal prerogative as the right to choose one's particular style of hats. And with this fundamental respect for individuality goes a deep and abiding interest in form and beauty. It is no accident that the country in which human personality can function most freely, remains, for all its political vagaries and economic unsoundness, the country that still sets the standard of civilised taste.

If we look a little further into the causes of this, we shall be struck by the historical fact that in an era of regimentation, uniformity and centralisation, France has proved extraordinarily resistful. To-day, if you meet a countryman on the streets of Paris and ask him what part of France he comes from, he will never say from such-and-such Department, but always from such-and-such Province—Champagne, Brittany, Languedoc, Lombardy, Alsace. In other words, he refuses to regard himself as a crea-

## *Through ART to INDIVIDUALISM*

ture of an artificial political division; he insists upon the human dignity of remaining a person from an ancient province which has its own dialect, its own traditions, and its own way of looking at life. This dogged resistance to all the modern forces making for centralisation and standardisation has contributed mightily, not alone to French literature and art, but to the Frenchman's deep respect for personality. Present-day observers are agreed that although Paris is a national capital as is perhaps no other city, there is a sharp movement away from the dominance of Paris, both political and cultural. Deep in the heart of every Frenchman is an incurable contempt for federal authority, and in the France of to-day, more than in any other "unified" Western country, the drive towards decentralisation is strong and realistic. Intuitively the Frenchman realises that there can be no decent art or decent personal life in a country that is much standardised or much regimentated. Within even so small a country as his own, he sees that there must be wide cultural variations and definite social and traditional differences. At all costs it must avoid a barren uniformity.

Now the application of all this to Anglo-Saxon countries, and to ourselves above all others, is very direct, for these observations about France are largely true of other Latin countries, Italy especially, and in the case of Germany, in spite of the fact that she is in so many respects exactly like us, the aftermath of war propaganda still twists our judgment. Certainly Americans might gain a few wholesome lessons from the humble surveyal of these facts. In

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

almost every one of the ways above mentioned we are exactly at the antipodes to France. To-day in America the forces of standardisation and centralisation are in full cry; Federal authority regulates the minutiae of our lives, and our popular national magazines have developed to a high point the technique of finding the lowest common denominator of taste. We are terrified at individuality and difference; we think in terms of majorities. It extends even to the amenities; the fox-trot which is popular in New York this week will be all the rage in Chicago, New Orleans, and San Francisco the next. Our art and music, our styles of furniture and handicraft, our books, our theatre, our hotels, our moving-pictures *par excellence*, are all standardised and moulded to a shape recognisable by all equally. It is no accident that our more sensitive writers are always complaining that the country as a whole is far too big for one canvas, yet they must write for that country as a whole, if they want to be heard at all. Respect for individual human personality has with us reached about its lowest point; and it is delightfully ironical that no nation is so constantly talking about personality as are we. We actually have schools for "self-expression," and "self-development," although we seem usually to mean the expression and development of the personality of a successful real-estate agent. Yet if our civilisation is ever really to justify itself, we must somehow recapture that deeper respect for the individual.

But the way to that recapture, as our survey has shown us, is not through mere futile rebellion by the

## *Through ART to INDIVIDUALISM*

younger generation, even though that rebellion, futile as it is, will help. It is rather through a complete transvaluation of values; and it may actually be that we are not capable of making that transvaluation. The emphasis must be placed again, as it always is in periods of genuine humanism, upon decentralisation and wide and deep variations; upon the individual himself rather than upon the external checks and balances of authority. In that task of shifting the emphasis of our interest we must look to the artist for our greatest help. It is through art, and art alone, that we can regain any individualism worthy of the name. We can be startled out of our eternal preoccupation with commercialism and moralism—of which advantage is so shrewdly taken that we are bound hand and foot as soon as our back is turned—only by the vivid and direct reminder of real values by the creative artist.

## WHAT *Can a* YOUNG MAN DO?

My English friend meant to be polite. But clearly he was puzzled.

"Why do all my young American friends invariably ask me if I know of any job they can get in England or Europe? Last month in Paris I saw hundreds of men who had been in the American army who had gone back home to be discharged and had then scraped together enough money to enable them to take the first steamer back to France. All your younger journalists and writers seem to be planning just one thing—how to get out of this country by hook or by crook. Yet you know how impossible Europe's economic condition is to-day compared with America's. For a young man without independent means even to make his own living in Europe to-day is an onerous task. But your countrymen come over by the boat-load in spite of all the difficulties. Why is it?"

Half apologetically I said something about intolerance and bigotry.

"I understand that," he said, "even an outsider can not help seeing certain things. Nevertheless you have, in your phrase, all the 'makings' of a great country and a great civilisation; you have national youth, abundant resources, an enormous fund of goodwill and vitality. The war has not crippled you



## WHAT *Can a* YOUNG MAN DO?

as it has us. The world lies before you. America is still the land of opportunity. I should think it would be a challenge to your young men. And as for the unpleasant things—I should think the obligation to fight these evils would be a stimulus. Instead, we have the spectacle of a young and vigorous nation sending more and more of its best young manhood to a civilisation that quite literally is dying. Youth rushing to live with senility. Why is it?"

Now to the average American I daresay my English friend's question will seem unreal. He will think of the score of young men he knows who haven't the slightest desire to leave the country, the hundreds more who hope to buy a motor car and own a stucco home in the suburbs, and he will probably conclude that the Englishman had in mind only writers, artists, and other strange fish of that fry, who in the nature of things might perhaps be expected to be discontented, but who really don't matter very much one way or the other. Indeed, the average American's personal opinion is likely to be that the country will be just as well off without these troublesome and impertinent youngsters anyway. The strong, the alert, the efficient are all staying: by the light in their eyes any one can see that some of them will eventually get to Wall Street and sell oodles of fake oil-stock to greedy suckers. No, says Mr. Average American, the real young men are not going. And from his point of view he is right.

But to the intelligent foreigner, who can hardly be expected to share our amiable American preju-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

dices in these matters, the steady denudation of the United States of its imaginative and adventurous and artistically creative young men is a sight which may well make him question the validity of many of our complacent assumptions about our so-called civilisation.

Those who take the trouble to keep in touch with that small part of the younger American generation which regards its condition and quality as of something higher than a piece of animated lard, know with what frank and disconcerting eagerness these young men look forward to escape from these shores. They know well enough that the Englishman's question is strictly relevant. Of course the young high-school graduate of Topeka, Kansas, has no desire to get away, for he hopefully anticipates a prosperous career of real-estate speculation, and is well content to let a monstrous regiment of women in the Mississippi Valley tell him that he shall not drink a bottle of wine in cosmopolitan New York, nor smoke a cigarette in rural Nebraska, nor read "*Les Chansons de Bilitis*" anywhere north of the Rio Grande. If the young Topekan finds the repressions and regulations getting too much for him, he can with a slight degree of effort organise a little lynching party and let off steam that way. Certain members of the esteemed Turkish nation have followed this technique for years; in Armenian atrocities the Turk has found a first-class compensation for the emotional aridity of his teetotalism, and while we unfortunately haven't any Armenians handy to exterminate, we had excellent substitutes during 1917

## WHAT *Can a* YOUNG MAN DO?

and 1918 in the pro-Germans, and during 1919 and 1920 we have done pretty well with the "Reds," and of course there are always our coloured citizens to fall back upon. No, what is pleasantly termed the "backbone of the country" will not go. They never do. But what William James once said of his university is equally true of his country—our irreconcilables are our proudest product; and it is precisely our irreconcilables who are going.

Something must be radically wrong with a culture and a civilisation when its youth begins to desert it. Youth is the natural time for revolt, for experiment, for a generous idealism that is eager for action. Any civilisation which has the wisdom of self-preservation will allow a certain margin of freedom for the expression of this youthful mood. But the plain, unpalatable fact is that in America to-day that margin of freedom has been reduced to the vanishing point. Rebellious youth is not wanted here. In our environment there is nothing to challenge our young men; there is no flexibility, no colour, no possibility for adventure, no chance to shape events more generously than is permitted under the rules of highly organised looting. All our institutional life combines for the common purpose of blackjacking our youth into the acceptance of the *status quo*; and not acceptance of it merely, but rather its glorification. (I recall a fine passage of Plato wherein he says that one of the real virtues of youth is its ability to be shocked at things as they are.) In industry, commerce, science—especially in so vital a subject as educational psychology where any real revolution

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

will be begun—in medicine and law, and in the game of hoodwinking morons (otherwise known as politics) the field in America is open and the opportunities are great. But in literature, art, music, the labour-movement, the theatre—in brief, in all those activities where the creative instincts of youth have freest play, science alone excepted—the field in America is closed.

Even in science the exception is more apparent than real. Big business has somehow managed to identify science, and psychology along with it, as a mysterious ally of efficiency, economy and all the other shibboleths of what it assumes is the *summum bonum* of life, increased production. Big business is willing to subsidise universities and laboratories and research because it thinks that money so given will return enriched pragmatically, if not in hard cash, an hundredfold. Perhaps it will, but when the financiers discover that the best psychologists are working for an educational revolution that will exorcise from the minds of our children their inhibitions and fears, and will enable them to think straight enough to know how to go about changing our present economic system, perhaps they will not be so generous with their cash. For any development of the true scientific spirit will be fatal to the present wasteful order of things. But to-day the number of men, either in business or in the universities who see the implications of endowing research, psychological research in particular, are but a handful. The successful business man regards such endowment as a graceful way of capping his career, as well as the



## WHAT *Can* a YOUNG MAN DO?

fulfilment of an ethical obligation; he is seldom intelligent enough to contemplate the consequences. The university man, too, is equally blind in most cases; he shares all the current prejudices and clings to the current taboos. Even in our science schools, as in all the rest of our civilisation, there is no concession to the spirit of youth.

At this point the practical person will be sure to point out that youth resents whatever lack of opportunity there may be, chiefly in what may be called, for convenience sake, the amenities of life. America, the practical person admits, is to-day a strong, materialistically-minded country, but he says, we must not be too harsh with her simply because the more gracious aspects of life have not yet been fully developed or because the artist feels himself crushed by the hardness and unmalleability of his environment. That is precisely the point. Youth is not interested, and rightly not interested, merely in material success or in a career that commands the respect of his neighbours. Youth does not care, and rightly does not care, merely to make money, merely to "get on." Youth wants to savour life, to enrich its quality if he may and if he can, to feel and experience something of its range and depth—youth wants to make over civilisation so that others may in increasing measure do likewise, for that is the glorious way of youth. Youth is not content, and rightly not content, with shaping its life to conventional ends alone—to marry, "settle down," mow the lawn, drive its own Ford, read the popular magazines, join a lodge, go to the movies, drink grapejuice, vote blatherskites ✓



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

into political office, listen to incompetent preachers holding forth on doctrines in which no one with an ounce of grey matter any longer believes, send its children to schools and colleges to have their minds devastated with bad philosophy and worse economics, and get its only excitement occasionally out of the vicarious thrill which accompanies Babe Ruth's feat of knocking a home run.

To accept life as it is and make the best of it, may be an admirable quality in middle-aged men, as it is a lovable quality in old men, but it is a horrible thing in a young man. The intransigent spirit of youth focusses its aspiration upon the quality of life. It demands something richer and more varied than is thought good for it by the W. C. T. U. of Centreville, Ohio. It demands also that it shall have the opportunity to help make over into something finer than we now know, the civilisation of which it is a part. But in America youth is permitted to do neither one thing nor the other.

The other day in an unguarded moment, Mr. Mark Sullivan let the cat out of the bag in a dispatch to the *Evening Post* of New York. Mr. Sullivan was giving a post-mortem explanation as to why the ruling clique in the Republican Party has settled upon Senator Harding as a candidate, rather than upon any of the other men who were equally acceptable to the ruling powers. He cited several reasons, and then picked out the human motive which made the choice irresistible. Senator Harding, he explained, was a man after their own hearts, a mediocrity like themselves. The Old Guard could

## WHAT *Can* a YOUNG MAN DO?

be comfortable with him; if any of the boys met him on the Main Street of their "dismal" home-towns, they could talk to him free and easy-like with no self-consciousness or embarrassment.

Now the adjective "dismal" is not mine, but Mr. Sullivan's. And although, if his attention were called to it, Mr. Sullivan might describe it as an inadvertence, the word is unerring and deadly. The dispatch was probably written in haste with little chance for careful revision, which makes the choice of that particular word all the more revealing of what the writer really thought. As a matter of fact, nothing could be more exact. That is precisely the trouble with these home-towns. They are dismal, dismal beyond the endurance of men who, after all, are the children of those who once built real civilisations, and among whom, on occasion, must be a youth who remembers. In these "dismal" places there is no art, no music, no drama, no intellectual life, no festivals and gala days that are not a mockery of gaiety, no religion that can summon and cleanse emotion, no concept of morality except a rancid, superficial Puritanism combined, as is usually the case—with an inward sordidness and hypocrisy, no sense of the joy of life, no graciousness, no urbanity. These home-towns are rural in a bad sense, through and through, self-complacent, envious and intolerant of what they do not understand, successful enough materially but living a life that is wholly dominated by a conventional fear of the worst kind—a fear of what people will say.

This is an indictment, and it is meant to be an in-

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

dictment. The same idea is vulgarly expressed in the popular song, "How Are You Goin' to Keep 'Em Down On the Farm, After They've Seen Paree,"—a song which contains much homely wisdom and may be commended to the attention of all Bishops and pastors.

Before the war, of course one could escape from this rural horror by migrating to the cities, and most young men who possessed the imagination of a minnow took full advantage of their opportunities. But to-day the big city has been made over into the likeness of the home-town. The home-town has always been jealous of the city, and now at last it has succeeded in making the city nearly as uncivilised and dismal as itself.

In plain truth, the whole country is engulfed in a flood of petty regulations of all kinds, and energetic organisations, devoted to the task of meddling with everything and seeing that everybody is as dull and stupid as themselves, to-day hold the whip hand. The Eighteenth Amendment is but a symbol of the times. It stands, in fact, for the prohibition of everything. What we Americans are insanely trying to do is to make our civilisation fool-proof. The chances are it can not be done, yet in so far as we succeed, we shall discover that we are making it genius-proof as well. Civilisation can not be justified if it does not cherish enough freedom to permit a man to go to hell in his own way. And in the twentieth-century America the chances are becoming slimmer and slimmer every day of leading any other kind of life than the monotonous majority-

## WHAT *Can a* YOUNG MAN DO?

ruled, unimaginative existence of the great average. Youth is gradually awakening to this dreary fact and is properly resentful.

Yet youth of the real sort would gladly stick it out if the opportunity to change the environment in any appreciable way were offered. No man wants to abandon his own country if it is humanly possible to avoid doing so. We are home-loving animals; that simple, natural patriotism for the soil from which we sprang—quite unlike the artificial patriotism for the national state, with which it is generally confused—is rooted deep down in all of us. But in these days what opportunity has a young man to effect any such appreciable change in his American environment? Practically none at all. All doubts on this score will be dissipated in a moment by reading a few typical commencement exhortations of this present year. What is the burden of all of them? "Gentlemen of the graduating class, we stand at a great crisis in civilisation. The rest of the world is in the grip of chaos and Bolshevism. America stands as Gibraltar against the onrushing tide of anarchy! We must return to those great principles on which our country was founded. We must create a new reverence for that immortal instrument, the American Constitution (cheers), struck off by those great minds in 1787 . . ." Think of it!—1787, over 130 years ago. Our form of government is to-day one of the oldest among modern states, as it is the most conservative. Yet the appeal to our youth is always to throw all its vitality behind the preservation of that ancient form. The same strain runs through all the busi-



## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

ness, professional and moral exhortations to the youth of America. Art and literature are seldom mentioned of course, and then only in a half-apologetic manner and with a gibe at "the vagaries of the present day."

In short the institutional life of America is a combination for the blackjacking of our youth into the acceptance of the *status quo* not of 1920, but of the late eighteenth century in government, of the early nineteenth century in morals and culture, and of the stone age in business. If the young man of to-day still has enough native vitality and intellectual power to attempt to break these chains he will be made to pay too high a price. If his interest is in literature, he must either become popular or starve; if in art, he must choose between flattering the vanity of silly rich people or enduring misunderstanding and neglect; if in the theatre, he must reach the lowest common denominator of Broadway or the movies or put all his energies into the struggle to make a bare living. Of course there are exceptions; but the point is that they are exceptions. These exceptions are not accepted generously; they are merely tolerated, and even then with some impatience. Every social influence in the country is against them. Small wonder then that they look with such eager eyes towards Europe.

My English friend was mistaken when he spoke of our youth rushing to live with senility. It is youth rushing to live with youth of its own kind. One of the most amazing results of Europe's years of misery has been the quickening of all kinds of cultural and



## WHAT *Can a* YOUNG MAN DO?

intellectual life. In spite of starvation, disease, political chaos, the breakdown of all the old standards of life—indeed, perhaps because of them—the people who are interested in art and literature and music and the theatre and revolution (the genuine article, not our imitation kind) can find all those interests satisfied in Europe to-day. There are music festivals in Vienna even though the children are starving. The youth who wants to take part in a real revolution can do so in Italy to-day, though food and fuel are lacking. For those who seek carnival and the Latin spirit there is still Paris, though France is face to face with financial ruin. Those to whom the theatre means everything will get the stimulation they need in Berlin and Munich, though Germany lives under the treaty of Versailles. And for the more adventurous there is Russia.

Who can wonder that the young men we should do our best to keep with us are leaving on every boat. It is not surprising that they turn with disgust from such self-conscious and helpless groups as the Young Democracy and the League of Youth and the rest. They are not deceived by the Y. M. C. A. and Chautauqua lamb masquerading as the revolutionary lion; they know well enough that all the fine phrases about democracy and co-operation are merely middle-class, Anglo-Saxon, morality impulses disguised in new terms. They are heartily tired of the fake. They want the real thing, and their sure instinct tells them that in Europe (not in England of course), even in the Europe that is dying from the follies and crimes of its old men, life can still be lived.

## AMERICA *and the* YOUNG INTELLECTUAL

And we who, because of one obligation or another, must for a shorter or longer time stay behind, can not we be permitted to accord to youth as it ventures forth our admiration for its courage and perhaps envy it a little? Can not we do something to make it possible that the answer to the question set forth as the title of this paper must not forever be—Get out!

THE END



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